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Village dialogues, between
Farmer Littleworth, Thomas

VILLAGE DIALOGUES,

BETWEEN

FARMER LITTLEWORTH, THOMAS NEWMAN, REV. MR.
LOVEGOOD, AND OTHERS.

BY

REV. ROWLAND HILL, A. M.

FROM THE

EIGHTEENTH LONDON EDITION,

WITH

ADDITIONAL DIALOGUES.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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VOL. I.  
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CONTENTS OF VOLUME I.

Dialogue	Page
I. Cottage Piety; or the good Order of Thomas Newman's Family.	5
II. The Subject continued—Sunday Devotions.	14
III. Account of Thomas Newman's Conversion by Mr. Lovegood's Preaching, with his happy Marriage to Betty.	22
IV. The Church defended against false Friends, and inward Enemies; in a dispute between the Rev. Mr. Dolittle, Farmer Littleworth, and his Family.	39
V. Conversation between Farmer Littleworth and two Ministers, the Rev. Messrs. Brisk and Smirking, on the evil Nature and Tendency of Stage Plays.	61
VI. The Prodigal's Conversion at Sea, or glad Tidings from Henry Littleworth, with a Letter to his Father.	83
VII. The Sunday School Examination, with a Character of the Family of the Worthys. .	100
VIII. The Prodigal's Return, with his Reception, and the Family Rejoicings on the Occasion.	119
IX. The Evils of the Slave Trade delineated. .	137

CONTENTS.

- X. The Evils of the Slave Trade farther delineated. 153
- XI. The History of the Family of the Littleworths, with the Character of Rector Fillpot, and Mr. Meek, his Welsh Curate. . 168
- XII. A Sunday Evening's Conversation upon the Mercies of God in the Justification and Sanctification of the Ungodly. . . 184
- XIII. On the Evils of the Slave Trade, concluded. 203
- XIV. A Whisper from behind the Door; or the Secrets of private Scandal made Public. 226
- XV. Containing the Second Part of the same Conversation. 240
- XVI. More News from Lower Brookfield, proving the Efficacy of the Gospel on the vilest of Sinners; or, the Evils of Seduction delineated. 281
- XVII. The Story of Mrs. Chipman continued. . 297
- XVIII. The Character and Experience of the Christian Minister exemplified. . . . 325
- XIX. The Character of three Sorts of Ministers, represented in Contrast with each other. 358
- XX. The Contrast; or, conjugal Happiness founded on Chastity, Fidelity, and Affection. 387
- XXI. The Evils of Seduction farther continued. 414

THE

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

TO THE SEVENTH EDITION.

CONTRARY to the accustomed rule of most authors, no Preface or Introduction has been hitherto thought of by way of recommending these Dialogues to the public notice; they have been entirely left to speak for themselves: and the public attention has been attracted by them, far beyond my expectation. As we grow old, it is fit we should grow modest. This edition, therefore, appears more according to the accustomed form, and modestly asks for a farther hearing, especially, as it is to be hoped, that some alterations, and many additions will be found as amendments to the work.

The last impression was rendered so tardy in its circulation, by an unfortunate sale of the copy-right, that by many it was deemed to be out of print, so that the present impression will appear like a life from the dead.

I am happy to be informed by the respectable Bookseller, who now possesses the copy-right, that the price, and manner of publishing the present edition, will render it an easy purchase to the public; and in this, I trust, I shall have my reward.

For though, as to myself, I neither have, nor wish to have any pecuniary advantage in the sale of the present edition; yet, having been informed that many of my readers have perused these little dramatic attempts, I trust, to their eternal good, I have only to

express my thanks to the publisher, and to pray for the continuation of the divine blessing on the publication.

Nor can a stronger argument be wished for, by way of encouragement for the revival of the work, with all its defects, whether real or supposed, than its former utility to the souls of men.

Were it, however, in my power to render the publication still more complete, after all my efforts, I should be happy to accomplish it; though I find I should have a task before me, which wiser heads than mine would be ill able to perform; for to please such a variety of critics, and so dissonant in their views on the same subject, would be a task indeed!

One set of them admires at least my humble attempt to fix an appropriate name to the different characters, before they are dressed, that it may be known what is to be expected from each of them, like the running title of a book. Others, not well versed in drama, tell me, that nothing should be discovered by name, because the character is anticipated before it should. Now, it shall be supposed that all these are discontinued, and the mere unsentimental names of Brown, Johnson, Jones, Wilson, &c. had been substituted, would such a cold conceit have gratified or displeased?

Some have told me, that all ridicule is inconsistent with the temper and spirit which Christianity should inspire.—Others have determined, that it is utterly impossible to be too severe, where folly and wickedness are to be exposed; especially where the dramatic dress covers all such attacks from the charge of personal abuse. Some have supposed, that every attempt of pleasantry or wit, are utterly unallowable on a subject which in itself is so solemn and grave. Others have said, that such allies of fancy, if innocent and within correct bounds, recreate the mind, engage

the attention, and cannot be productive of any bad influence whatever; and that the graver language of Scripture, written under the plenary inspiration of the Holy Spirit, (though even there, such instances are not wanting,) needs not to be the standard to regulate what we write for the instruction of each other. And again; some have supposed, that where a bad minister or character has been held forth as a proper example for reproof; it was meant as a *sweeping* charge, without any discrimination. Others have thought, that if I have lashed characters who are bad, equal respect has been shown, and in the same line to those who are good; and if these different contrasted characters are not so *regularly* kept up, as might have been deemed requisite in the judgment of some; yet they conceive the *quantum* of good represented to be in existence, is quite equal to that which circumstances will allow us to suppose, from the depraved state of the world, through the wickedness of the human heart. Still, in some instances I am satisfied, I have been favoured with hints that will improve the work; and these shall be thankfully adopted: and if they appear not so numerous as might have been expected, I conceive I have sufficient apology for this my tenacity to my own opinion, and that for the following reason.

I never appear in print, without consulting those who have better brains than myself. It may not, therefore, be amiss, to inform the reader, that previous to these Dialogues being presented before the public, most of them passed under the eye of the late invaluable Mr. Ambrose Serle; who kindly took upon him the office to be *the final editor of the press*.

Under the sanction of such a name, and of one whose publications are deservedly in such high repute, I have, as I conceive, but little to fear.

If, therefore, the amendments are but few, the en-

largements are more considerable: on these I have attempted with the more caution, as my highly respected corrector is no more with us.

One set of critics, however, I shall entirely disregard; and as in no one instance have I shown any favour towards them, so shall I expect none in return. I mean the bigot of every party. And while they are so ignorant of their own spirit, as to sanction their sectarian principles by masking their evils under the mild appellations of order, regularity, consistency, principle, discipline, steadiness, &c., it would be in vain, were I so inclined, to attack them in return. But into a controversy with them, I forbear to enter, who make the sacrament the exclusive criterion of the sect to which they belong; so contrary to the mind of Christ, and to the nature of that ordinance, in which all his living members are so solemnly directed to look upon themselves as one in him.

This controversy, however, has been so ably discussed in a late masterly publication by Dr. Mason, of New York,* that one would almost conclude, all such minor considerations would dissuade from a spirit of schism and division, so contrary to those lovely, uniting tempers, which by the influences of the gospel, are brought home to the heart. Long live the author of such an excellent publication, but longer still, the publication itself.

R. H.

Surry Chapel, March, 1817.

* Reprinted by Gale and Fenner.

VILLAGE DIALOGUES.

DIALOGUE I.

COTTAGE PIETY; OR THE GOOD ORDER OF THOMAS NEWMAN'S FAMILY.

FARMER LITTLEWORTH AND THOMAS NEWMAN.

The Farmer goes after his Labourers, and finds Thomas at his work, singing.

Farmer. WELL, Thomas, you seem very merry; what are you singing?

Thomas. Why, sir, I am singing one of the songs of Zion.

Far. What sort of songs are they?

Tho.—I am singing *his* praises who hath redeemed me by his blood, sanctified me by his Spirit, and leads me to his glory: and while I am singing I am cheerful, and then I can work the better. Besides, these good songs keep bad thoughts out of my heart; and you know, sir, bad thoughts are bad things, and bring about bad actions.

Far. Why, Thomas, I wonder how you can be so merry in these hard times?

Tho. Hard! sir! Why, we never mind hard times while we can but live with a joyful hope of a happy eternity; we need “be careful for nothing, while with prayer and thanksgiving we can make our requests known unto God.”

Far. I am sure my wife and I have care enough; what between my son, who is gone to sea, and my three daughters, whom I can never keep at home, unless they have twenty gossips, and fine misses with them: though I have such a good farm, yet it all goes as fast as it comes in.

Tho. O sir, you want a proper housekeeper.

Far. Nay, Thomas, you should not say so, for my old dame is as good a housekeeper as any in the parish, if my children did not turn out so untowardly.

Tho. The housekeeper I mean, is, Mr. Godlyfear; and I trust, by the blessing of God, I know the worth of that gentleman very well, he has lived in my house almost ever since Mr. Lovegood has been vicar of our parish; and Mr. Godlyfear charges nothing for his wages; though he provides us with more bread and cheese, in these hard times, than ever we had when times were better. And, sir, if so be I may be plain with you, had you and madam the same housekeeper, he might have kept your son from running into wickedness, and then he need not have gone to sea; and he would have made your daughters keep at home and mind the business of the house.

Far. Why, Thomas, you are not the worse for hearing your *parson*. I confess he has made you a better man than when you came home drunk with me from Mapleton fair.

Tho. A thousand, and a thousand times I have thought, that we were worse than the hogs we went to buy, and which I drove home the next day.

Far. Ah! Thomas, that was partly my fault.

Tho. But, sir, if you think I am the better for hearing our minister, why won't you come and hear him too?

Far. Why, if I did, I should be *jeer'd* at all the

market over. You know, Thomas, your cottage is not in our parish; and what would our rector say, if I was to leave our church to hear Mr. Lovegood? for you know he hates him *mortally*; calls him all sorts of names; says he is a '*Thusiast*'; but what he means by it I cannot tell: and I should have as good a peel about my ears from my wife and daughters, as ever I should have from the parson.

Tho. What of all that, sir, if you could but get good to your soul? for there is no good like it.

Far. Ah, Thomas! this is fine talk, for if I was to quarrel with our parson, I should never have any peace in the parish, and he would raise my tithes directly.

Tho. Why since I have been blessed with the fear of God, I have been kept from the fear of man; and it has been a thousand times better with me ever since. Now I am a poor man, and had need fear every body, and you have a good farm and need fear nobody. If Mr. Godlyfear had lived in your house, he would have kept from you far enough such fears as these.

Far. I confess, at times I should be glad of such a guest, for he seems to have kept your house very well.—How many children have you?

Tho. Thank God, sir, I have six, and another a coming.

Far. Why, how do you provide for them all?

Tho. By prayer and patience.

Far. I am sure you must have something better than that.

Tho. Better, sir! I am directed to pray for my daily bread, and wait with patience till it comes; and the Lord is as good as his promise; for if we "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all these things shall be added unto us." If I am poor, and a little pinched at one time, I have plenty at another. To be sure it was to admiration.

what a sight of things were sent us, when my wife, the fourth time she lay-in, was brought to bed of twins. Just as we began to mistrust what we should do, when the children came so fast, in came madam Trusty, 'Squire Worthy's housekeeper, with such a nice bundle of baby-linen, and other things for my wife, that she and the children were soon dressed like *gentlefolks*; and, I am told, the Miss Worthies made these nice clothes with their own hands. Then two days afterwards, two of the young ladies came themselves to our cottage, and gave my wife half-a-crown a piece; and the same day, Mrs. Traffick of the shop, sent her such a large pitcherful of nice smoking-hot caudle, it would have done your heart good only to have smelt it; and said, that when the pitcher was empty, we were to send it back, and she would fill it again. Our dear minister too went about and got us money enough to buy coals, to serve us all the winter: and at the christening, he gave us five shillings to help us on: so that I was never better off in all my life; for the faster the children came, the better we were provided for. I will promise you, sir, we had enough and enough to do to praise God for his mercies on these occasions. And though I say it that should not, our poor children look as decent and as healthy, as any children in our parish, or the next to it.

Far. Well, Thomas, you had need *mind your hits* to breed them all up.

Tho. Why, sir, you know the old proverb, "God helps them that help themselves:" for first, I always put the children to work as soon as they are able: they either spin or knit; and my second son, Billy, has got a loom, which our worthy 'squire gave him; and he weaves very tidily, and my wife always keeps us well mended; she can put on many a patch, but she will never let us appear ragged: but

then, sir, we get all this by living in the fear of God.

Far. Why, Thomas, you live so orderly, I should be glad to stop a little longer, that I might hear your way of living.

Tho. Why, sir it would look so much like bragging and boasting, were I to tell you about our poor way of serving God in our cottage since he has changed my heart, that I should be quite ashamed of myself.

Far. Nay, but I must hear it, that I may tell it to my wife and daughters; perhaps they may mend their ways, if I tell them of yours.

Tho. Well, sir, if madam Littleworth and your daughters can get any good by it, and as you insist upon it, I will tell you how we live, both on week days and on Sundays. When I am called to labour, as soon as my wife and I are out of bed, I kneel down and go to prayer, by the bed-side; then I go to work. She dresses the children, and sets the house in order. When I come home to breakfast, the milk porridge, or what my wife can get for us is all ready; we never have any tea but on Sundays, for it will not do for a hard-working family, and many of our neighbours call it *Scandal broth*.

Far. Ah, Thomas, I fear you are right there, for when my wife and daughters have their gossips, and our little Sam the plough-boy, puts on his livery, that we may look like *gentlefolks*, I hear nothing else.

Tho. Well, sir, I make my eldest boy ask a blessing, and then the victuals goes down with a blessing: Next I make the children say a hymn or some other good lesson out of the books that our minister gives us. Then one of the other children returns thanks! After that my wife takes down the Bible, and reads a chapter, and I go to prayer; then I go to work, and as you know, sir, take my

eldest son, Thomas, with me, and he helps me wonderfully; and I do think I can do almost double the work, since I have had him with me. I really think, sir, your daughters would not be able to spend so fast, if I and my son did not work so hard; but I love to work for a good master.

Far. Well, Thomas, I shall have no objection against raising your son's wages, for he is a good lad.

Tho. Thank you kindly, sir, for the times are very sharp, and my son is a growing, hungry boy.— But I will tell you what we do next. I come home to dinner: now, you know, sir, as we have a bit of a garden, which I dig up at odd times, and we keep a pig, which we kill for the winter, what between the pickings out of the garden, the acorns which the children pick up out of the 'squire's park, and a little barley meal, it does not cost us much to keep it; so that we can get a slice of bacon, and that relishes the potatoes and garden stuff, and I really think we are as thankful for that, as many a lord is for twenty times as much. Then I make one of the children read a bit of the Pilgrim's Progress, or some other good book, that Mr. Lovegood gives us, and then I go to my work; and, sir, if you please, I'll tell you the thanksgiving hymn, I sing as I walk along.

Far. Well, Thomas, let us hear it, for I am told you could sing as merry a song as any of us, before Mr. Lovegood came into your parish.

Tho. Well then, sir, this is my song:—

My heart and my tongue shall unite in the praise
Of Jesus, my Saviour, for mercy and grace;
He purchas'd my pardon by shedding his blood,
And bids me inherit the peace of my God.

My lot may be lowly, my parentage mean,
Yet born of my God, there are glories unseen;
Surpassing all joys among sinners on earth,
Prepared for souls of a heavenly birth.

Redeem'd from a thousand allurements to sin,
I find in my cottage my heaven begin;
And soon shall I lay all my poverty by,
Then mansions of glory for ever enjoy.

By the sweat of my brow, while I labour for bread,
Yet guarded by him, not an evil I dread;
And while I'm possess'd of all riches in thee,
My poverty comes with a blessing to me.

My labouring dress I shall soon lay aside,
For a robe bright and splendid, a dress for a bride;
A bride that is married to Jesus, the Lamb,
Shall shine in a robe, which is ever the same.

If my fare shall be scant, while I travel below,
Yet a feast that's eternal shall Jesus bestow;
No sorrow, nor sighing, shall ever annoy,
The heavenly banquet I there shall enjoy.

If my labouring body goes weary to rest,
Yet sav'd by the mercy of Jesus, I'm bless'd;
Fresh strength, for my labour on earth he bestows,
And above I shall bask in eternal repose.

Far. I confess, Thomas, you sing better sort of songs than we sing at our Christmas merry-makings; but let us hear how you end the day.

Tho. After my work, I return home; down I sit, and all my children come round me. I confess, sir, I am a little too fond of the twins, they are a pair of brave children: so I put one on one knee, and the other on the other: then I give them all a kiss, and my hearty blessing; for I love them dearly, and could work my skin to the bones to support them. Next I ask them what work they have done, how they have behaved to their mother and to each other: then I make the children read out of some good book, and I tell them what it means, and instruct them as well as I am able. Next we have a bit of supper, as the times afford; and afterwards my wife reaches down the bible, and reads a chapter; then we sing an

evening, or some other good hymn, and I go to prayer, after my poor fashion, and then our bed feels sweet to us; for, the Lord be praised! we have nothing to fear: for poverty keeps the door from thieves, and a peaceable mind soon sets us all asleep.

Far. You have told how you live: I confess I should be ashamed to tell you how we live; but, Thomas, I do not pretend to be a *Saint*; yet the house would be all in an uproar if I was to call my family to *say their prayers*, as often as you do.

Tho. Many and many a man may *say prayers*, and never *pray*.

Far. Ay, true, Thomas; and so I thought when Mr. Dolittle came to our house, while our daughter Polly was likely to die of a brain fever. I thought it was shocking when he came to *say his prayers to her*, that the man who could come with Madam Dolittle and his children to our house two or three times a year, to supper and cards, (what games and rackets we used to have!) and now he was to *say his prayers*, which I am sure he would not have done, if Polly had not been sick; but, oh! how it shocked me to hear her ask, for she was out of her mind, after he had done, *if they might not have a game at whist?* Thomas, I think I must have your parson with me when I die, if I do not like him so well as I should while I live.

Tho. But, sir, if I may be so bold, what came of it when Miss Polly recovered? If you sent for Mr. Dolittle to pray with her when she was sick, did you not send for him when she got better, to return thanks?

Far. O no: we forgot all that: but the parson sent a card, as my daughters call it, to tell them, that he and his family would come and see them upon Polly's recovery; and such a piece of work there was to make out a proper card in return! how they should word

it, and how they should spell it: for my daughters having been bred up in a farmer's house, and then sent to a boarding-school, are neither farmer's daughters, nor *gentlefolks*; but, however, religion was never thought of then.

Tho. Well, sir, I must not find fault with your parson; and I think you cannot find fault with mine; but, by your desire, I am next to tell you how we spend the Sunday.

Far. Why every day seems to be a Sunday with you, but as you do not then go to work.

Tho. But, sir, we have something better still on the Sunday.

Far. [Taking out his watch.] I cannot walk very fast, and I must not stop longer, as it is almost dinner time; but I will be here again to-morrow, and then you shall tell me how you spend your Sundays, and here's a shilling for your boy.

Thomas's boy. Thank you, sir, and be so good as to thank my young mistresses for the six-pence they gave me, when I brought the band-boxes from Madam Flirt, the milliner's.

Far. Ah! band-boxes! since my daughters have come home from the boarding-school, they have all turned out such fine misses, that the family is all of an uproar. Such new-fangled fashions and customs, I never saw before. I rue the day I ever sent my daughters to that boarding-school; but I must go: good day, Thomas.

Tho. Your servant, sir.

DIALOGUE II.

COTTAGE PIETY ON A SUNDAY.

FARMER LITTLEWORTH AND THOMAS NEWMAN.

Thomas is engaged in clearing ground.

Farmer. WELL, Thomas, you are going on with the job apace.

Tho. See, sir, what a deal of weeds and rubbish we have got together within these few days: All this puts me in mind of the natural heart of man, that there can be nothing done in it till the weeds and filth of sin are got out of it; and sin has taken deeper root in our hearts, than these briars and weeds have in this ground: and when we have got them all on a heap, we shall burn them out of the way. May the Lord do the same in all our hearts!

Far. Why, Thomas, I think Mr. Lovegood will make a *parson* of you.

Tho. Thank the Lord for his mercy! I hope he has made a Christian of me; and that is all I want. But, sir, I hope all is well at home, as you was not here yesterday, according as you said.

Far. O yes, but I could not get away from the parish meeting time enough: and there came in Dick Heedless, for relief, because his wife was brought to bed, and though he had but two children before, he declared they were all starving. So I thought I would go and see, and to be sure such ragged children, such a dirty house and bed; such broken windows, and heaps of filth in every corner, I never saw before in all my *born days*. So I told the vestry, that he had

better wages than you, as I always gave him task work, otherwise he would not work at all; and he is a strong hearty fellow, and can do a deal of work if he likes it: And when I told him to come to your house, and you would put him in a better way of living, he swore a great oath, and said he would never be of your religion, for he was not bred up to your way of thinking.

Tho. Ah! when poor labouring men must run away to every idle wake, horse-race, boxing-match, and cock-fight, no wonder that there is nothing left for the family. I am very glad 'squire Worthy is determined to put them all down in our parish, for our minister preached a trimming sermon against them all; and the 'squire thanked him for it in the church yard, before all the people, and promised him there should be no such doings in that parish. I promise you, sir, we never were so well off before; what between the minister and the 'squire, there is not half the wickedness in our parish that there was a few years ago.

Far. There are not many such 'squires as 'squire Worthy in our parts.

Tho. The Lord send more of them, sir! for it is wonderful the good our 'squire does in setting such a good example. Hail, rain, or shine, let who will be away from the church, the 'squire and his worthy family are sure to be there. It does my heart good to see them all come in; especially, when I consider, how many poor people are relieved by them: and it is wonderful, how he takes to our minister, and says all manner of good of him wherever he goes.

Far. But, Thomas, I hear from my wife and daughters, how *desperately* 'squire Bluster of Revel-Hall, has quarrelled with your 'squire, because he has turned out so religious; and how Madam Blus-

ter will not even speak to Madam Worthy, because when they went to see them, instead of having cards after tea, they had Mr. Lovegood there to *preach*, and *say prayers* to them, and after that they sung psalms.

Tho. Why, sir, was there any harm in that? why when the wind sits that way, I hear the bell ring for family prayers every night; and when Mr. Lovegood is not there, it is *to admiration* how the 'squire himself can exhort and go to prayer with his family.

Far. But you know, Thomas, there are none of the ministers round the country come to see your parson on account of his religion.

Tho. Why, it is an odd story, if religion keeps other parsons away from Mr. Lovegood; but this is a mistake, sir, for there are Mr. Meek and Mr. Godlyman, and other good ministers besides, that come to see our minister; and then we are sure to hear the bells calling us all to a sermon in the church after we have done our labour. I love to hear the sound of our church bells to my heart, for whenever they ring we are sure some good is going forward.

Far. But, Thomas, you must remember your promise, and tell us how you live on the Sunday.

Tho. Well then, sir, you must know, my wife always contrives on the Saturday to get our clean linen ready for us, and somewhat a little more decent than our common working dress, to go to church in on a Sunday; the house is always done up quite neat and clean, and all our clothes got ready against the Sunday morning: then on the Sunday morning we get ourselves ready, and begin the Sabbath with a chapter out of the bible, a hymn, or psalm, and a prayer; then we all eat our breakfast, and afterwards send the four eldest of our children to the Sunday school, which our minister and 'squire Wor-

thy have lately set up; after this we all go to church, if we can, unless my wife is obliged to stay at home to nurse the little ones, and then we take it by turns! and I must confess, sir, I sometimes feel a little proud to see such a nice young growing family, and how neat and decent my wife makes us all look, and how orderly my children behave!

Far. Why, to be sure, Thomas, your wife is a wonderful notable woman.

Tho. Ah, sir, and she is so loving and good, and kind, I would not part with her for the best duchess in the land. Well, and after church we all come home: then I ask the children, one by one, where the text was, and what they can remember of the minister's sermon, and talk with them of the good things we have been hearing. After we have had such a dinner as the mercy of God provides for us, we have another prayer: then the children go again to the Sunday School, and we all meet again at church in the afternoon; and I think it would do your heart good to hear what pains our dear minister takes with us, how nicely he expounds the chapters, and how he tries from the pulpit to make known to us the way of salvation. Whenever he tells us of our evil ways, and evil natures, he seems to pity us to the very heart; and tears, again and again, have I seen drop down his dear cheeks, while he has warned us of these things: but when he tells us of the love of our Lord Jesus Christ to us poor sinners, and what grace and mercy he can show in changing our hearts, he is all alive, and seems to feel every word he says.

Far. Why, the people say he has it all off by rote, and that he has no book, but the Bible, with him in the pulpit. He must have a wonderful memory!

Tho. By rote, sir! he has it all in his heart; and by the grace of God, he has enough in his heart

for a thousand sermons; and as it comes from the heart, so it goes to the heart. Blessed be God, it comes to my heart! I am sure of that. Well, after sermon we all go home, and then we treat ourselves, for once in the week, with a dish of tea, and again talk over the good things we heard at church. At seven o'clock we go down to the vicarage; and to see how lovingly Madam Lovegood shows it towards us all when we come into the house, would do any one good; how she helps to bring out the forms and chairs, and seats us all comfortably in the kitchen and hall; and when we are ready, our dear minister comes in and repeats to us what he had been preaching before, and exhorts us, and prays, and sings to us so charmingly, that there comes such a blessing with it, as makes it feel like a little heaven upon earth.

Far. Ah! but master Thomas, our rector speaks and preaches desperately against these private meetings, and says your parson keeps a '*Venticle*'; but what he means by it I can't say; I suppose it was some hard word he brought with him from Oxford.

Tho. Mr. Lovegood is not the first man that has had all "manner of evil spoken against him," but we are sure it is "falsely, for Christ's name sake;" so that we can all "rejoice and be exceeding glad."

Far. Well, Thomas, it is to be hoped you have had enough of religion after all this.

Tho. Enough, sir! why we are obliged to very sharp labour through the six days, it would be a thousand pities to lose any part of the only day given us to seek after our heavenly rest: for what is the body to the soul! Blessed be God, we have a little more, after all this: we have some more good talk at supper, a chapter, a psalm, or hymn, and a prayer; and then we throw ourselves into the arms of our

dear God and Saviour, and sleep on earth as though we were to wake in heaven.

Far. But, Thomas, does God Almighty require all this religion from you? would not less serve?

Tho. Why, sir, these things are our delight; we do not serve as slaves, but as sons; we serve, because we love the service: look into the bible, sir, and you will find what my wife and I find, that religion is regeneration, and that holiness is heaven: all the Lord's "ways are ways of pleasantness, and all his paths are paths of peace."

Far. I will look into our great Bible, when I get home; but I am ashamed to say, I know more about the christening and burials, that are written in the first leaf, than I do of the book itself. But how is it that you are so fond of talking about your wife?

Tho. Why she is the joy of my heart, and the comfort of my life.

Far. Where did you meet with her?

Tho. At church.

Far. Why, surely you did not go to church to seek for a wife?

Tho. After I began to know the value of my soul, I only went there to seek for salvation; but about half a year after I was converted from my sinful courses, I used to see a mighty decent dressing young woman, who came from Mr. Blindman's parish, to our church; and I thought of it; (I hope not too much, when I should have thought of something better,) if I married, that the Lord might intend her for my wife; and as I used to meet her at Mr. Lovegood's house, I once plucked up courage and plainly told her what I thought about it; but I could get nothing out of her, but that she could not think of it till she had made it a matter of prayer; then, thought I directly, this is the damsel that will do for me;

for, the Lord knows, I made it a matter of prayer also, and this made me ask her the same question again and again.

Far. L—d, Thomas, do your sort of people go to prayer before you are married?

Tho. O sir, if I may be so bold, you should not “take the Lord’s name in vain,” it is a breach of the third command; but we wish to pray upon all such occasions.

Far. I confess, I am apt to say words I should not; but how did the match go on?

Tho. Why a little after this, the young woman went and consulted Mr. Lovegood about my offer, and one evening Mr. Lovegood sent for me to his house, while she was there, and so down I came; and when I saw her there, my heart went pit-a-pat, in a manner I never felt it before. We then talked over the matter before him; and he read to us that wonderful good exhortation in the marriage service, showing the duties there would be between us; then he went to prayer with us, after this we promised each other marriage: and as soon as we were out-asked we were married accordingly. They do say, matches are made in heaven, and, I verily think ours was made in heaven, for I have been as happy as a prince ever since: for nothing makes us miserable; we can praise and bless God for every thing.

Far. Well, Thomas, I am sure you are a happier man since you have taken to this new religion.

Tho. New religion, sir! why it is as old as the Bible; and, I am sure it is as old as the Common Prayer Book, and the Articles, and Homilies of our Church.

Far. Why, Thomas, you are quite a *scholar*; what do you mean by the Articles and Homilies? I never heard any thing about them in our Church.

Tho. Ah, but Mr. Lovegood tells us about them

in a very precious manner; and I am sure, I shall for ever bless the Lord, for the good I have received from what he has shown us from them, and from the word of God.

Far. Well, Thomas, I must have another talk with you, for I want to know why you changed your religion.

Tho. Sir, I will tell you at any time you please, how the Christian religion changed me.

Far. Then I will come again as soon as I can; but it begins to rain, and I cannot hobble very fast with my gouty legs. Farewell, Thomas.

Tho. Your servant, sir.

DIALOGUE III.

THOMAS NEWMAN'S CONVERSION AND HAPPY MARRIAGE.

FARMER LITTLEWORTH AND THOMAS NEWMAN.

The Farmer goes into Thomas's Cottage, and waits till he comes home to dinner. After some conversation with the wife and family, Thomas comes in.

Thomas. АН, sir! are you come into our poor habitation?

Far. Yes; for I was afraid to stand in the field, because of the gout.

Tho. Well, thank God, by his blessing on my health, I am able to get bread for myself and my poor family too; for I know nothing of the gout.

Thomas's Wife. My dear, see what a nice haslet Mr. Littleworth has sent us. I have not boiled any bacon with the potatoes, for I am going to fry a bit of his kind present.

Far. Why, we killed a pig yesterday, and I sent Sam with a little that you might taste of it.

Tho. Thank you, sir, a thousand times; for a little fresh meat is very *relishable* to a hard-working family. [The dinner is prepared.]

Betty. Come, Billy, my dear, leave your loom, it is your turn to ask a blessing. [They all stand up.]

Billy. By the bounty alone of our Saviour we live,
Ador'd be his name for the food we receive;
But, O may our spirits be graciously led
To feed on himself—He is heavenly bread.

Far. There's a good boy; I wish I had taught my girls a few such good things. But, Thomas, while you eat your dinner, you are to tell me about changing your religion.

Tho. Well, then, sir, I'll tell you as near as I can, how, as I said, religion changed me.—My father, you know, was a poor working man, and died of a consumption; and then my mother went to the workhouse with two children. I was the oldest of them, and was put out apprentice to one old James Gripe, who used to work me morning, noon, and night, and half starved me; and his wife Margery was worse than he. So I ran away from them, and went to the justice about them; and his worship questioned me very hard, but got me a better place at farmer Thrifty's, where I had plenty of work, but good victuals and drink. But the farmer was all for the world, and many of the family were *desperate* wicked; and as I grew up, I wonder they did not make me as wicked as themselves. But wicked enough I was, God knows, for I scarce ever went to church, unless I was to meet some one there, or to show my new clothes when I had any. I had no more notion of a Bible, or what it meant, than one of the horses I used to drive at plough.

Far. Why, Thomas, you had a *good heart at bottom*, or you would have followed more of their bad courses.

Tho. A good heart indeed! when I never prayed, read my Bible, thought of my soul, or any thing else, but wickedness. But you shall soon hear what a good heart I had: for I well remember, when I was about seventeen years old, while we were carrying barley, just as we were going to bind, about half the load slipped off the wagon, threw me down flat on my face, and then rolled upon me. And what thoughts I then had, no mortal can tell! I could neither

struggle, cry, nor breathe. There I lay till I was quite black in my face, and my breath was almost out of my body; I thought these words sounded like thunder in my ears, "Lost once, lost for ever!"—While my senses seemed almost gone from me, and before the barley was taken off, I was quite senseless for awhile; but when the fresh air came to me, I soon began to breathe; and when my senses returned, I remember, I could not, but in my blind way, make somewhat of a prayer to God for my preservation; and directly the wagonner and the rest of the men, began to *jeer* me for my devotions; for I had but just before been singing one of my old foolish songs. But terribly bruised I was, and was obliged to keep my bed for three days, and could not go to work for a full fortnight afterwards.

Far. It was a very narrow escape indeed, Thomas. But did it not drive you to make some good resolutions? I remember, when I had the gout *deadly* bad in my head and stomach, I vowed many, and many a time, that I would mend my ways: and once I sent for Mr. Dolittle, and he told me, he thought it would be no harm if I *did a little more*; but the Lord knows to my shame, as soon as I began to recover, I forgot all my vows.

Tho. Ah, so did I, sir! but I have since found that all our resolutions to mend our ways come to nothing, *till God changes the heart*: and so it was with me; for directly as I could again get to work, I soon forgot my prayers, and was as light and as thoughtless as ever. For, though I had a little pride in me, not to neglect my work like many others, yet nothing like a fair or a wake for me. I am ashamed to think what a fool I used to make myself while I was dancing at the Golden Lion almost all night, when I was no more fit for such games than one of our cart horses.

Far. But surely, Thomas, there can be no harm in a little innocent mirth now and then.

Tho. Why, I'll tell you, sir, I am never afraid of what I do, provided I can but feel prayer while I do it. Now at my labour I can sing and pray with a good conscience all the day long; but I never could ask God's blessing when I went to a wake; or that he would protect me at a horse race. Pray, sir, do you ask a blessing over the card table when people come a merry-making to your house?

Far. Ah, Thomas, you come too near home; I must not tell you all we do at our house.

Tho. But, sir, if you dare not tell all, the Lord knows all.

Betty. I am afraid, my dear, you press Mr. Littleworth rather too hard.—I hope you will excuse him, Sir, for my husband means no harm.

Far. No, no, Betty, I am sure Thomas means well; I sha'n't be angry; he may go on with his story.

Tho. Well, on I went year by year, getting worse and worse, till some years afterwards, when our vicar was removed to some sort of a 'thedral place, as, I think they call it; and then some noble gentleman, *Lord Chancellor* I think it was, gave Mr. Lovegood the living.

Far. *The Lord Chancellor* you mean, Thomas.

Tho. Ay, ay, it may be so: he is a great man, and a mighty man with the king. May God bless him and the king too, a thousand times, for sending such a good minister among us! Well, soon after Midsummer our new vicar came, and as it was the first time, a many people there were to hear him. Though we had heard nothing of him till we saw him in the church, yet it was to admiration how he read the lessons and prayers; they sounded like new prayers to me—he read them so wonderfully fine. But

when he got into the pulpit, we did not know what to make of it, for he had no book with him but a little Bible. We thought for sure he had left his sermon book behind him, while every moment we expected he would be *fast*; but on he went for a brave long time: and it is wonderful how lovingly he spoke to us, while he preached from this text, "We preach *not* ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves, your servants for Jesus' sake." He told us, how he hoped he was sent purely for the good of our souls; and how fervently he had prayed to God that he might come with a blessing among us; that his house, his heart was open to us, even the poorest of us; and that all his time and strength should be given up for our good. Never did any man surely win upon all the people by such a sermon, in coming to a new living, like our minister.

Far. Hold, master Thomas, not quite so fast; for there was old Mr. Goodenough, the schoolmaster, spoke against him downright at the first sermon: he said publicly, in the church-yard, he had no notion of such new-fangled teachers, and that all the parish were *good enough* already, and he wanted to be no better; and that *every tub must stand upon its own bottom*: and from that time to this the old gentleman has come to hear *Mr. Dolittle*, of our parish, and says, his doctrine suits him best. And again, there was that noted good old lady, Madam Toogood, after the second sermon your parson preached, she went away to Mr. Blindman's church; and a notable story she told at our house when she came to drink tea with my wife and daughters; how he made out all the good people to be as bad as devils; and then she told us all how many times she went to church and sacrament; how often she said her prayers, and that in regard to her giving away to the poor, she was even *too good*.—But, Thomas, I'll tell you a secret

—While Madam Toogood was cracking and boasting away all the time she was drinking *scandal broth*, as you call it, her servant, who came to light her home, was telling in the kitchen of all her stingy tricks:—how she made ever so many poor people sick with her dish-wash, which she called Broth; and how, while she was reading the psalms and lessons, and doing her devotions, she would keep scolding all the time: and that once upon a time, when she had *made herself up*, by the Week's Preparation, for the holy Sacrament, after she came to church, she found that it was to be put off, as it was so near Easter; and that then she fell into a terrible passion, and said, "Lord have mercy! have I had all this trouble for nothing!" and that she was such a downright scold, that no servant could live with her for six weeks.

Tho. Well, sir, if this old lady can brag she is not like other people, like the Pharisee: let me come in with the poor Publican, and cry, *God be merciful to me a sinner!*—his prayers will best suit my case. But if Mr. Goodenough and Madam Toogood did not fear leaving their parish-churches, why should you be afraid, at least once in a way, to leave yours?

Far. Ah, Thomas, you have me there! But go on with your story.

Tho. Why, sir, that very sermon which Madam Toogood found such fault with, was the sermon that did my soul more good than all the Sermons I ever heard before; for it was then that faithful servant of God ript up the deadly wound in my heart, which none but Christ could heal. I remember well the text, *The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Who can know it?*—And plainly did he show, from the Bible, the rueful state of all mankind: How that, when Adam fell from God, all fell in him: and this he showed was the truth, all the Bible over: How that, before the flood the

wickedness of man was so great upon the earth, and all flesh had so corrupted themselves before God, that there was but one family (that of Noah) in which the fear of God was preserved among the many millions which were upon the earth; and that a merciful and righteous God could never have sent down such a judgment, if the great wickedness of man had not deserved it at his hands: and then he showed that such was the hardness and wickedness of mankind, that as soon as they began to multiply upon earth a second time, they became again as vile as ever: that all the *waters* of the flood could never wash away the filth of the world: that then he tried the *fire* of his wrath upon the filthy cities of Sodom and Gomorrah; but still man continued the same most wicked creature: and that even afterwards, when God took one family to himself, that they might be his own peculiar people, as was the case with the Jews, though he was perpetually showing the miracles of his power before them, and blessing them, more than any other people, with the gifts of his providence; yet while the meat was in their mouths, they rebelled against him, and made themselves worse than the heathen who knew him not: and that even when the dear Son of God himself came down from Heaven to save us, the Jews rejected him, and the Gentiles nailed him to the cross.

Far. Why, Thomas, when I was a school-boy, I used to read over my Bible then; and I remember, what you say is all very true.

Tho. Then, why should Mr. Goodenough and Madam Toogood be angry with our minister for telling the truth?

Far. To my way of thinking, people may have as much religion as they, without so much outside show.

Tho. But, sir, I must tell you how our minister

went on. From the Bible, he showed us how that people lived now-a-days, just as they did ever since the world began. And, to be sure, what he said of the abominable lives of all mankind, showed how true the Bible was. How he laid out the wicked ways of the world in all their public wars and cruelties against each other! How he showed, that whenever people could get together, it was only for all sorts of wickedness, cursing, swearing, fighting, lewdness, and every thing that was bad. Then he told us what miserable creatures sin made us in our own houses; that malice, anger, pride, cruelty, were the tormentors of every family; while Bibles were banished, prayer neglected, holiness laughed at, and every thing that related to the soul and matters of salvation, were never thought of: and that though, through the grace of God, some were saved from this dreadful state, yet, that the word of God had declared it, That "broad was the gate that led unto destruction, and many there were that went in thereat;" and that "narrow was the way that led unto life, and few there were that found it." Then the good man stopt, and wept like the rain, as a father would over a dying child he dearly loved. So I took it; and then, for the first time, I began to weep over my sinful state. O! thought I, does that dear servant of God love my soul better than I love it myself? while I thought that surely he meant all his sermon against me; for my conscience told me I deserved it, and a thousand times more. There I sat, with a broken and contrite heart, for the first time; and in the next pew sat Ned Swig, as he was once called, who keeps the Golden Lion; where I had often been in my sinful practices, crying and grieving for sin, still more affected than myself.—
[Thomas weeps.]

Far. Thomas, why should you cry? You should not be melancholy, for, I dare say, God Almighty will forgive you.

Tho. Why, my dear sir, I know he has forgiven me; and like poor Mary Magdalene, it is fit that I should weep, as she did, out of love to him that loved her so much, because she had much forgiven.

Far. To be sure, there is a wonderful alteration in Master Swig's way of living; for they say, he once kept a *deadly* bad house; and that the first time he heard Mr. Lovegood, he went directly home, and pulled down from the walls all the merry songs and pictures which he had bought to please his customers. To be sure, some of them, they say, were enough to make one split one's sides with laughing; and his wife thought for sure he was mad; though since, she has become as strong a follower of Mr. Lovegood as himself; and in about a month afterwards, instead of his merry songs and pictures, it was all about religion:—A journey from Time to Eternity in one place; Mr. Dodd's Sayings in another: and then elsewhere, ever so many parliament acts against tippling and drunkenness, cursing and swearing; and then two fine pictures, called the *Higroglyphics*,* or some such word, of the natural and spiritual man: but that is above my reading, Thomas.

Tho. And it was above mine too, till I heard Mr. Lovegood: but now I find, as we pray in the Christmas Collect, "That all who are regenerate, and born again, and are daily renewed by God's Holy Spirit," are spiritual men, and bring forth the fruits of the Spirit: and that natural men act according to the natural corruptions of their heart; and that explains the two trees, which are man in two different states.

Far. Well, I am sure, I wonder Ned had such re-

* *Hieroglyphics*, the farmer means.

solution to reform: I suppose, he must have lost many and many a golden guinea by his religion: for since he has taken to this new way, they say, he does not draw half the *drink*; and I wonder how he can keep up his Golden Lion: for it is said, no man can have a drop of drink beyond a pint or two; and that, from year's end to year's end, not a drunken man is ever known to come out of his house!

Tho. Now this is all true, and yet Master Edward is provided for in a way wonderfully providential; for the precious word of life, held forth by our dear minister, has drawn many a poor sinner from afar to our church; and then away they all go to the Golden Lion between the services.

Far. What! from the church to the alehouse. That is as bad as in our parish.

Tho. Why, sir, if the good people in your parish should go from the church to any of the alehouses, that they might talk about the sermon, read the Bible, and sing God's praises, while they refresh themselves, I should see no harm in it: but I only meant to say, that if Master Edward has lost some of his customers, he may have his reward partly in this world: yet certainly he still loses some golden guineas; but in the room of these he expects a golden crown. For once he lived by sin, but now he lives by faith; and I am sure while the Bible is true, he'll never starve: "For if we first seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all these things are to be added unto us."

Far. I confess, there is not such an alehouse in our town, though there are enough of them.

Tho. What! are none of the gentlefolks, or justices, or quality of the town, willing to assist in reforming them?

Far. Hush, Thomas, I am churchwarden this year; they made me swear a desperate strict oath

against all these bad ways; and if I was to stir in it, every one would be against me: but I'll promise you, the oath gripes my conscience pretty sharply; and I do think if I was to come to your church, I should be in a state of desperation, unless I was to mend my ways.

Tho. Nobody that comes to our church is led into a state of desperation; for as soon as ever our dear minister saw many of us weeping under a sense of sin, he besought us all to come to church in the afternoon, as he could not leave us till another Sunday, that we might hear what mercy there was in the Gospel for poor sinners: and from that time forward we had an afternoon sermon.

Far. Yes; and a fine bustle this made among many of the parsons up and down the country, for bringing up such sort of customs of *double duty*, as they call it, in villages.

Tho. Why, if Mr. Lovegood had come into our parish on the same footing as you took the lease of your farm, he would have had a right to have made a bargain for his sermons, as you do at market for butter, cheese, cattle, and corn; but, God be praised, he only thought of the salvation of our souls.

Far. Well, well, our minister wants to make us good too, if he can, for he tells us a deal more of our duty than many of us practise; and we have all his sermons round once a year. I have heard them over nineteen times; and he says we shall have no new ones till we practise the old ones better; though he has given us two or three famous new ones of late against modern '*Thusists*', which come round about Whitsuntide. Madam Toogood says, one of them he borrowed from Mr. Blindman; and the text is, "If the blind lead the blind, they shall both fall into the ditch." And a trimming sermon it is.

Tho. Why, I have heard our dear minister these

seven years, and he has his heart full of sermons, and they are always new.

Far. Now, Thomas, I think you are very uncharitable; for you condemn all ministers if they don't preach off-hand.

Tho. Nay, that is not true, sir; for there is that dear loving gentleman, Mr. Fearing, he dares not preach as our minister, and some others, without his sermon-book; but blessed sermons he reads to us as ever man can write. I love to hear him, dear man. But, sir, if you please, I would rather tell you about the afternoon-sermon, which was such a blessing to my poor bleeding heart, as the time slips away.

Far. Well, I can sit a little longer.

Betty. Would you like to eat a little bit with us, in our plain way? I can fry you a fresh bit, if you please, sir. Billy, fetch Mr. Littleworth a clean trencher.

Far. No, Betty, I thank you; I had rather go hungry to my dinner. But let us hear, Thomas.

Tho. O sir! after my heart had been so deeply cut in the morning, instead of going home to dinner with the family, I took my bread and cheese, and went into the fields, walking about, crying with Job, "Behold, I am vile;" and with the poor publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" When I heard the bells ring, away to church I went; and twice to church on the same day, I never went before. On the road I met poor Master Edward: I began telling him the feelings of my heart; and, instead of answering me, he wept; and I wept too. We well remembered how much evil we had done to each other, by being mess-mates in sin; and into the church we went. Our dear minister soon came in; and in the second lesson he read these words: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation,

that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." These words so affected him, that he stopt and wept, then wiped his eyes, and read them over a second time. After prayers, he got into the pulpit, and took the same words for his text; and O, such a sermon, sure, never was preached before. He showed, all the Bible over, that never did any poor sinner sue for mercy but he had it. He told us of Manasseh, of Saul, the Philippian jailer, and the thief upon the cross: that all these poor bleeding penitents were at once accepted, without any other righteousness but what was to be found in him who died to justify the ungodly; and that *whosoever*—and again he said it, "Whosoever cometh unto him, he will in no wise cast out." O what a time of love was this! How Edward looked at me, and I at him, while we both, by faith, looked at Jesus Christ, who died for our redemption!

Far. And was this all you did for your salvation?

Tho. Why, sir, nothing more could be done; for the love of Christ broke our hearts into a thousand pieces: from that moment we felt the chains of sin drop off from the soul, and we were at liberty to love and serve the Lord. Now, for the first time, we began to experience what it was to be "made new creatures in Christ Jesus; old things passed away, and all things became new." Being thus "made partakers of the divine nature," and "renewed in the spirit of our minds," that prayer in the communion service, we trust, was answered now, which we might have read, but never prayed before: "Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name." And when he concluded that blessed sermon with these words from St. Paul, "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable

service;” with a hearty Amen, we at once found that we could give ourselves away to live to his glory.

Far. Ah! but Master Thomas, all the followers of your Vicar are not such saints, for all this: for there is Mr. Feigning, the Squire’s steward, though he is a wonderful stickler for your parson, is no better than he should be: and Mrs. Fairspeech, though she comes with such a wonderful sanctified face, loves a sly drop as well as any of her neighbours, and then scolds her husband for not being of her religion.

Tho. Yes; and it grieves us to the heart, to think that there should be any “who name the name of Christ, and depart not from iniquity:” but hypocrites there always were, and will be; yet real religion is never the worse for them. But still, you know, sir, the Gospel has done wonders among us. Common swearers, and others, who never prayed before, have been made to pray of late: drunkards have become sober, and their ragged families decently clad: Sabbath-breakers, who had heart for nothing on that day but vanity and sinful mirth, can now fill the house of God, and find it their heaven upon earth; yea, and families where wrath and anger reigned, are now ruled by love, by “that meekness and gentleness which is in Christ Jesus.” Thus have we happily proved “the Gospel to be the power of God to our salvation,” by the blessed fruits of righteousness which have been produced thereby.

Far. I don’t wonder that you are so fond of your sort of ministers, while they do you so much good.

Tho. Why, we care not what sort they are, provided they are but of a godly sort: but you know, sir, how terribly people are hardened in sin, if the lives of the ministers, and other great folks, be inconsistent with the gospel; and how many there are

now-a-days who scoff at the Bible itself outright, when such men so mortally wound so good a cause, yea, such men had much better never preach at all, a thousand times, while their lives so belie their words.

Far. Well, I must confess, that I have many times thought that if I were as good as the parson, I need be no better: but is not young Parson Merryman one of your sort of late? I remember him when he was a strange wild *blade*; how he used to gallop over my farm, shouting and roaring like a madman, after Lord Rakish's hounds; and how *deadly* angry he used to be with his uncle, who would have him made a parson of, because there was a good fat living in the family; how he could crack his jokes, how soon he *did over* his parishioners in the afternoon, that he, and the gentlefolks who came to see him on the Sunday, might not be disturbed from dinner and the bottle.

Tho. Yes, sir; and I dare say you have heard that when our minister was called to preach before my Lord Bishop, and all his clergy, how that worthy young gentleman was so affected at the things he heard about the duty of ministers (what they should preach, and how they should live) that he could not be at rest in his conscience till he came to see Mr. Lovegood; and now every body wonders at what an altered man he is.

Far. Ay; and it is not above two years ago when he came to our town, while the stage-play people were there, and how he romanced with our daughters; and what a racket he kept up, when all of them should have been in bed and asleep, it would be a shame to tell.

Tho. Yes; but then he was a minister of man's making; but now he is a minister of God's making. Once he loved his sports, but now he loves the souls of his parishioners: once he loved the fleece, but now

he loves the flock; once he was for this world, but now he is for the next. O sir, what wonders are done by the grace of God on the hearts of sinners!

Far. Well, Thomas, I believe Mr. Merryman is a true convert; but I must be going; you and your family have picked up the scraps pretty clean.

Tho. It is too good to be wasted: thank the Lord, we have had a charming meal. [Thomas to his daughter.] Come, Betsy, my dear, it is your turn to give thanks.

Betty to the daughter. Don't be ashamed, my good child; but let Mr. Littleworth hear how well you can say your thanksgiving hymn. [The daughter says her hymn.]

The beasts of the fields, and the fowls of the air,
Are kept by thy pow'r, and fed by thy care;
Thy merciful providence, faithfully nigh,
Sustains the poor ravens whenever they cry!

But they cannot praise thee; they know not from whom
The streams that they drink and their sustenance come:
Far wiser may we be, and thankfully own,
That all our supplies are from Jesus alone.

Far. There's a brave girl; here is sixpence between you and your brother, for saying his grace before dinner; and when you lie-in, Betty, I will remember you.

Tho. The Lord bless you, sir, with his grace, for your kindness. But you would have me tell you how we live; and, to my mind, you would not think we do right if we were to neglect our chapter and our prayer because you are here. Betty's a good scholar; and I have a little pride in me that people should know how bravely she can read. [Betty takes down the Bible, reads the latter part of the 14th chapter of St. Luke.]

Thomas to Betty. Can't you remember, my dear, what a wonderful sermon our minister made against all these sad excuses; how that a man could not pur-

chase a piece of ground, buy a few cattle, have a little trade, or marry a wife, but out of all these things, innocent in themselves, they could find an excuse to neglect their salvation, and despise the marriage-supper of the gospel!

Thomas then offers up a short prayer: prays for the King, and his favourite, the Lord Chancellor, for sending them Mr. Lovegood; and that God would bless his ministry to them: and, after some other petitions, prays affectionately for his master and his family. The Farmer gets up much affected;—turns to the window—stifles his concern—wipes his eyes, and says—

Far. Thomas, I'd give the world to be as good a man as you are: and that my wife was as good a woman as your Betty. Well, well, I will pluck up courage, and come and hear Mr. Lovegood next Sunday, come what will of it; and I'll try to bring my daughter Nance with me, for she does not seem to be so bad set against Mr. Lovegood as the others; but I know I shall hear enough of it from Mr. Dottle and my neighbours.

Tho. I wonder that gentleman should say such hard things, wherever he goes, against our good minister, and that he should so often preach against him as a hypocrite and over-righteous 'thusist; surely, it is out of ignorance. The Lord open his eyes! But I am a few minutes beyond the time of labour. Come, Thomas, my boy, let us be gone, Mr. Littleworth wants to be at home.

Far. Farewell, Thomas.

Tho. and Betty. The Lord bless you, sir, for your kindness.

DIALOGUE IV.

THE CHURCH DEFENDED AGAINST FALSE FRIENDS AND INTERNAL ENEMIES.

THE REV. MR. DOLITTLE, FARMER LITTLEWORTH
AND HIS FAMILY.

We left the Farmer much struck and affected by Thomas Newman's conversation and prayer. On the next Sunday afternoon, he and his daughter Nancy attended at Brookfield Church, after he had been at Mapleton Church on the morning. He received the Word with solemn surprise, and was soon melted into tears. Thomas immediately caught Mr. Littleworth's eye, and began to mingle the sympathetic tear with his. Mr. Lovegood's looks were directed that way; and he was so overpowered at the scene, that for awhile he could scarcely continue his discourse. Mr. Lovegood's engaging and affectionate style of preaching had frequently a great effect on his auditory; and remarkably so on the Sunday afternoon when the Farmer first attended. Nor was the conversation less affecting between Thomas and his Master when the service was ended. He was at once disarmed of all his prejudices, and mingled almost every word with a tear. Miss Nancy's mind began also to open to receive the truth, if in a less rapid, yet not in a less gracious manner.

When he arrived at his own house, Mrs. Littleworth conceived he had heard some very bad news, and begged to know what it was. He said, it was very

good news. The question was naturally asked, If he had heard any thing about Henry, their son? The Farmer began to explain the nature of the good news, or glad tidings of salvation, he had been hearing at Brookfield Church, mixing each word with a tear. The wife and daughters, Nancy excepted, began at once to suspect that his brains would be turned; and that the peace of the family would be ruined by his *new* religion.

No opposition from that quarter, however, prevented the Farmer and Miss Nancy from giving all possible diligence to attend the means of grace.— His visits to Thomas Newman were now almost as constant as each returning day; who soon introduced him into Mr. Lovegood's company. Mr. Lovegood put into his hands several profitable books for his private instruction; which he read with great attention and diligence, and through his now constant attendance, twice every Sabbath, and oftentimes on Mr. Lovegood's Week-day Lecture, he being a man of an intelligent mind, though but poorly educated, began to grow in grace, and divine knowledge very considerably.

The family, however, were terribly perplexed at the change: and, after they had said all in their power to dissuade him against his new notions in religion, concluded, it might be the best plan to call in Mr. Dolittle to their aid. Happily, however, for the Farmer, his mind began to be well-settled and grounded in the knowledge of the gospel before this visit took place. Mrs. Littleworth and Miss Polly, however, called at Mr. Dolittle's, one market-day, and invited him to come and see what could be done. Soon afterwards he rode, one afternoon, according to his promise, to the Farmer's house; and the conversation, as it then took place, shall next be laid before the reader.

Mr. Dolittle. WELL, Master Littleworth, how are you? I was afraid you were ill of the gout, for I have not seen you at church above these three months.

Farmer. I am obliged to you, sir, for your kind inquiries; but, I thank God, of late I have been better than usual.

Dolit. How is it then, sir, that you have been so remiss in your duty in not attending church?

Far. Oh, no, sir; I have not neglected church; for I, and my daughter Nance, have lately been to hear Mr. Lovegood.

Dolit. So I have heard, sir; and, in a little while longer, I should not wonder if he were to drive both of you mad, by his enthusiastic harangues.

Far. Why, sir, did you ever hear him?

Dolit. I hear him! No, sir; nor shall I ever disgrace my character by attending such modern seducers.

Far. Did you ever talk to him, sir?

Dolit. I talk to him! no; nor will any other rational clergyman hold conversation with such sort of fellows.

Far. "Does our law judge any man before it hears him?"

Dolit. O sir! this is bringing matters to a fine pass; you can quote scripture against your minister already.

Far. Now, Mr. Dolittle, it is not fit that either you or I should put ourselves out of temper while we are talking about religion: but if you will be so kind as to come in and sit down, and drink a dish of tea, I should be glad to talk matters over with you; and, if I am wrong, the Lord direct you to set me right!

Dolit. No, Mr. Littleworth; while you, as churchwarden, can act as you do, and can set such an example as to leave your own parish-church, and run rambling after such sort of teachers, I shall not think

it proper to darken your doors any more. If you had gone to the meeting after old Dr. Dronish, it would not have been half so bad; for, I am told, he preaches good, sober, moral sermons; but to run rambling after such wild enthusiasts, is too bad.

Mrs. Littleworth. But, sir, if you will not drink tea with my husband, yet, I hope, you will stop for my sake, and my daughters; for his new notions in religion are as bad a grief to us as they can be to you.

Dolit. Ah, Mrs. Littleworth, I pity you to my heart! It is amazing how much the peace and comfort of people's families are broken up by these religious disputes.

Far. Well, sir, if you won't accept the invitation from me, you are quite as welcome to accept it from my wife and daughters; neither does religion, nor Mr. Lovegood, teach me to be rude or uncivil to my neighbours; so that such disputes cannot be laid to the charge of religion, but on those who oppose it. I should be very glad if you would walk in and sit down, that we may talk matters over in a Christian-like manner; and while I answer for myself, if I should in any wise speak *unmannerly*, I'll beg your pardon.

Dolit. Well, sir, this is fair. I am apt to be a little hasty, I confess; but you must not impute this to the badness of my heart.

Far. Why, sir, to my humble way of thinking, all that comes out of us, which is bad, comes from something that is bad within us. But pray, come in, sir? [calls his daughter Polly.] Where is Sam? Tell him to take Mr. Dolittle's horse, put him in the stable, and give him a lock of hay, and a good feed of corn.

[Mr. Dolittle comes in; a fire is lighted in the best parlour, and tea is brought in; but no one appears but Mrs. Littleworth and Miss Nancy to wait on the Rector.]

Far. Why, Nancy, where are your sisters?

Miss Nancy. They are gone up stairs to dress.

Far. To dress! Why, were they not dressed before Mr. Dolittle came? Now, all this they got by going to that boarding-school. They can't make you a dish of tea without putting on some new-fashioned gown, or new-fangled cap, and some other *nonsenses*. I hope, sir, you will talk to them for their pride; I cannot see the sense of such ceremonies in our way of living.

Dolit. Perhaps not, sir, but *young ladies* will have their foibles. [Their appearance in a gaudy, taudry dress, prevents any farther conversation on that subject.]

Dolit. continues. Now, sir, I am ready to hear what has made you change your religion, and why you have left your parish-church.

Far. Well, sir, as near as I can, I'll tell you all about it. When my father sent me a courting to my present wife, (Farmer Greedy's daughter,) after we had made a match of it, we put our fortunes together, and I bought the lease of my farm of the late Lord Rakish, who was as *wild a blade* as the present Lord that now is; and as he wanted money, they say, his steward received a *sly* sum of my wife's father, that we might have a better bargain; but of this I have no certain knowledge.

Dolit. I doubt, there are too many of these sly bargains made; but what has this to do with your change in religion?

Far. Why, having got such a good bargain, no world for me like the present; my heart was set upon it. I could be up early and late, about from fair to fair, that I might buy and sell, and get gain; and this I foolishly called the *main chance*: but as for my Bible and prayer, and the concerns of my precious

soul, I had no more regard to these things than a beast.

Dolit. And pray, where was the sin of this? Should not every young man mind what he is at when he takes a large concern? But if you did not do your duty in *saying your prayers*, and attending your church, that was your own fault.

Far. Yes, sir; these things, as they respect my worldly concerns, "I should have done, and not left the other undone." But that was not my case, for I was as wicked as——

Dolit. Hold, Mr. Littleworth; for it has been told me, that when the Bishop came about to confirm in those days, no young man appeared so decent, and so devout, as you then were; and that, for some time afterwards, you attended church and sacrament very regularly; and if, since then, you have been a little remiss in your duty, yet it is to be hoped you will remember in due time, properly to return to it, and that you will die a good man; and it cannot be expected that people should be so strict in religion while they have to rise in the world.

Far. Ah! I well remember, when the old Bishop came round our parts in those days, how Mr. Blind-man, in whose parish I then lived, told us, that our Godfathers and Godmothers were to answer for what we had done before; but that, after we were confirmed, we were all to stand upon *our own bottom*: and this frightened me *desperate* for awhile; and away I went and bought myself the *Whole Duty of Man*, *Nelson's Fast and Festivals*, the *New Week's Preparation*, and *Taylor's Holy Living and Dying*; and for about two months, in my way, I kept to my religion very strict; till just about that time the old Lord Rakish would have a *merry-making*, because his son came of age: and many a resolution I made that I would not go after such *nonsenses*; but when I

was told that young Parson Purblind, Mr. Blind-man's curate, was riding by with some other young sparks of the day, who were going there, I thought, for sure, *parsons* must know better than I, and that there could be no great harm if I went too. So, because I would not make myself particular, away I went, and there I got *deadly* drunk; and as I came home, I fell off my horse. (Lord have mercy on me, had I died in that state!) But, after that, I was ashamed to think of my religion; and as to my books of devotion, I soon laid them all aside; and to this day they are quite as fresh as though they were just bought out of the bookseller's shop: and there was an end to all my religion till I heard Mr. Lovegood.

Dolit. Well, but Mr. Littleworth, as you have got these good books still by you, why can't you *in moderation*, again take to religion, and do your duty, without taking up this *new* way?

Far. Why, sir, to speak the truth, I have not till of late discovered that the heart, the seat of all my actions, is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;" and that till God sets that right, nothing can or will be right. This has been the cause why this world, which I must now soon leave, was all my delight, while my heart neither knew God, nor desired to know him. Sir, I am ashamed to say what a wicked, worldly, negligent sinner I have been all the days of my life! [Farmer weeps.]

Mrs. Lit. Now, only see, sir, how mopish and melancholy these new notions in religion have made my husband! I am afraid, at times, he'll lose his senses!

Dolit. Indeed, Mrs. Littleworth, I am very sorry for your husband; he is a *good-hearted man at bottom*. Do you never try to divert him?

Miss Polly. Divert him, sir! Why, when my uncle and aunt, and two of our cousins, came to see us the

other day, (we always used to have a little *harmless mirth*) only, because my mother, and Patty, and I proposed to have a game or two of cards, away my father and sister Nancy ran out of the house, as though it had been on fire; and down they went to Mr. Lovegood's and *said prayers!*

Far. Now do, sir, hear me patiently. Thus have I lived, "without God in the world," neglectful of my precious soul, and forgetful of Christ, my only Saviour, till I am turned of sixty. I am ashamed to say what a sinner I have been, and how unfit I am to die!

Dolit. Well, but Mr. Littleworth, why should you run from one extreme to another? you know the old proverb, "Extremes are dangerous;" and there is moderation in all things: and, you know I have a sermon on that text,—“Let your moderation be known unto all men.”

Far. Why, sir, you have been our justice these eleven years; and when bad people are brought before you, I am sure you do much better in your office than to preach up to them such sort of moderation. You never tell thieves that they should be *moderately honest*; or drunkards (and the Lord knows we have enough of them) that they should be *moderately sober*; or the many bad people that throw themselves upon our parish, for the support of their base-born children, that they should be *moderately chaste*; and no such words did I ever hear from your pulpit, as that men should be *moderately moral*. Now, if this is not to be allowed in *morality*, how are we to make it out in *religion*, when we are commanded to “love the Lord with *all* our heart, mind, soul, and strength?” Does it mean, that we are to have a *moderate* love to God? and when we are enjoined to love our neighbour as ourselves, does it mean a *moderate* love to mankind? And pray, sir, should I repent

moderately, pray *moderately*, and have a *moderate* trust in God? If so, I really cannot understand the Scriptures, which say, that I am to “give ALL diligence to make my calling and election sure;” that religion “is the one thing needful,” for which I am to “forsake all that I have, that I may be Christ’s disciple;” and that I must strive (or, as Mr. Lovegood says, it means *agonize*) to enter in at the straight gate.

Dolit. You need not be so critical, sir; I only mean, you shall not be so over-zealous in religion.

Far. Why, I confess, as I have lately taken to read my Bible, I think it is there said, “It is good to be zealously affected in a good thing.”

Dolit. Now this is too bad, Mr. Littleworth. Don’t you think I know the Bible as well as you? Ring the bell, Miss Polly. I sha’n’t stop here any longer to be told my duty, when I have been so long minister of this parish.

Far. Why, sir, I did not know that I was telling you your duty: I only meant to observe, that I could not understand what you meant about moderation in religion; but if I pressed the point too far, I beg your pardon for it.

Dolit. Well, sir, I have before said, I’ll keep my temper if I can; but this cannot be done, unless you keep up proper manners while you choose to talk to me about your new religion.

Far. Well, sir, as to my new religion, as you call it, I do really confess, since I have heard Mr. Lovegood, my thoughts about these matters are wonderfully altered; and I will tell you in the most *mannerly fashion* in my power, how it came about. You know, I have an honest fellow works with me, Thomas Newman; and it is to admiration what a sober, orderly, decent, Christian-like man he is! and his wife is the nicest, tidiest woman I ever met with in

all my *born* days: and at different times, when I talked to him, I found that he had not only religion in his practice, but his Bible *at his finger's ends*. How I was ashamed of my ignorance when I heard him talk! But this made me determine to go to hear what sort of a parson he so much admired; for I remember the time when he was wild enough.

Dolit. Truly, Mr. Littleworth, it is a fine compliment to me, that you should go to one of your day-labourers to be instructed in religion.

Far. Why, sir, if I may be so bold as to say, that though learning is a good thing, yet it does not always make a good man; and that a poor man may have the grace of God in his heart, without having much learning in his head. And did not our Lord mean something of the same kind, when he said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes!"

Dolit. And so all the time and money that we have been spending at the university, has been of no sort of service; and every ignorant enthusiast that pretends to inspiration, is to tell us the meaning of the Bible.

Far. 'Las! sir, did I speak against human learning? It is well known that Mr. Lovegood is one of the *learnedest* men for twenty miles round; though I have heard him say, That human learning, to a man spiritually blind, does no more good than a lighted candle does to a man that is naturally blind: and, I dare say, sir, when you read the Homilies, you remember these words, "Man's human and worldly wisdom or sense, is not needful to the understanding of the Scriptures, BUT THE REVELATION OF THE HOLY GHOST, WHICH INSPIRETH THE TRUE MEANING INTO THEM THAT WITH HUMILITY AND DILIGENCE DO SEARCH THEREFOR."*—And the Lord grant

* Homily on reading the Scriptures.

that I may have a little of that blessed inspiration! for I am sure we need it.

Dolit. Now, I am sure, Mr. Littleworth, you must have misrepresented their words; I never can believe that they wrote so enthusiastically as all that.

Far. No indeed, sir; they are just as fresh, and as pat in my memory, as though I had read them but yesterday. But so it was, sir, that Thomas's good life and talk made me determine to go and hear Mr. Lovegood; and my daughter Nance went with me; and when I came to the church, I prayed to the Lord, that as he had made Thomas so good a man, so I might be made a better man; for I am sure there was room for me to mend: and a fine sermon he made (all *off hand*) from these words, "You cannot serve God and Mammon."

Dolit. And pray, sir, why could not my sermons, as well as his, have made you a better man? I know that such extemporaneous effusions please ignorant and vulgar minds, that are fond of gaping after novelty; but I am not ashamed of the sound and sober sermons I have been preaching among you, ever since I have been your rector.

Far. Why, sir, did I find fault with you, or any one else? I was only about to tell you how I was struck with Mr. Lovegood's sermon; for I certainly thought he made it all for me: and I actually asked Thomas if he had not been telling him about me. But he declared he could not have been so bold to his minister against his master; and then he said to me, that Mr. Lovegood could tell any one's heart from the knowledge he had of his own, and the word of God.

Dolit. Why, then, I suppose when all other trades fail, he'll turn *fortune-teller*?

Far. I cannot say as to that, sir, though, I am sure, he told my fortune plain enough that day; for

I thought he turned me inside out, while he showed me what a fallen worldly-minded creature I was.

Dolit. Yes; and all these preachers run on just in the same way. If any of us step a little aside, we are to hear of nothing but hell and damnation; and for every innocent infirmity, man is to be painted out as black as the Devil.

Far. Why, sir, to my way of thinking, both the Bible, and Common Prayer-Book, and the Articles of Religion, just say the same; and they say, all you clergy subscribe to them a many times over before you come to your livings.

Mrs. Lit. Yes, sir, and my husband has brought home such a heap of books and prayers from his new *parson* about the articles and *homicles*, I think he calls them, and Common Prayer Book! Then he tells us, that his is the old religion of the church; and he wants to read all these books over to us. He has got a book of prayers made by an old Bishop,* that he says, was of his way of thinking; and now wants us to kneel down, to say prayers to us, before we go to bed. But how can we have time for all these devotions in our way of living?

Dolit. Why, you are very right there, Mrs. Littleworth. If you do your duty well on a Sunday, and have a family prayer on a Sunday evening; and say some good rational prayers to yourselves before you go to bed on a week-day, God Almighty, who is very merciful, and forbids us to be righteous overmuch, cannot expect more from you, in your line of life.

Miss Polly. There, Father! I hope you will be guided by what Mr. Dolittle says, and not be led so much by your *homicles* and new religion.

Dolit. Why, Mr. Littleworth, you know I spent many years at Oxford; and there, I'll assure you, I was not inattentive to the study of divinity under Dr.

* Bishop Hall's Manual.

Blunderbuss, a man of approved religion in those days (though since then I have heard of Mr. Brightman, and some others, who have adopted your notions of religion:) yet it was not only his opinion, but that of many other learned and orthodox divines, that though our reformers were well-meaning men, yet they were not over-wise in religion: and that though religion, in the opinion of some, is now less practised, yet it is more improved; for we live in a very learned day. And our clergy now-a-days don't confine themselves to a few abstruse notions of those old divines, but make their sermons out of a variety of the most excellent moral writings that ever were composed, from among those we call heathens, but who had a deal of the light of nature, and knew much about natural religion, and they make the Bible much more intelligible. Master Littleworth, if I may give my advice, I would not wish you to be over-nice, nor over-wise in your religion. Do your duty as well as you can; and if you fail, trust in the Almighty's mercies. The rational clergy, in our day, know very well that there is a new sect, who puzzle people's minds about the terms *original sin*, the *atonement*, *regeneration*, *imputed righteousness*, and I know not what notions besides, which I am sure you need not mind, provided you do your duty without affecting to be more righteous than your neighbours. However Mr. Lovegood may pretend to be wiser than the rest of us, yet, if you will take our advice, according to the Scriptures, and "do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God," I am sure you need not fear. To be sure, sir, you have not forgot my sermon on that text, which I have never failed preaching to you, year by year, ever since I was inducted into the living.

Far. Ah! but, sir, that very text cuts me quite up; for first, I confess the many tricks and fibs I

have been guilty of at market; so that I have not done justly: and I have been as bad at mercy, for I always loved myself better than my poor neighbours: and then, with regard to walking humbly with my God, never did any man strut about at market like a *braggadocia* more than I have done: and as to humbling myself before God in prayer, or by repentance, I was as ignorant of these things as I am of the learning of an Oxford *schollard*. As for our articles, homilies, and prayer book, let *folks* be ever so wise and learned now-a-days, they seem to me to have been made by men wonderfully knowing in the Scriptures: for they not only explain to us what hearts we have by nature; but how mercifully we poor sinners are to be saved, through Jesus Christ our only Redeemer. And it is all laid out to admiration in a little book, given me by Mr. Lovegood, called “The Good Old Way;” and it was there that I think I see my picture just as it is in the 9th article, on the Fall of Man; where it is said, in a wonderful wise way, that “Every man, of his own nature, is inclined to evil; and that every person born into this world, deserves God’s wrath and damnation.”

Mrs. Lit. There, sir; this is the way my husband would be talking, morning, noon, and night, if we chose to hear him, in his uncharitable way, about all of us deserving God’s wrath and damnation.

Dolit. But, Mr. Littleworth, if we are not quite so good as we should be in our present *laps’d* state, we may all make ourselves better, if we please.

Far. Why, sir, it appears to me that “men *choose* darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil;” and that no bad man can have a good choice, or will, till God changes the heart: and though I cannot say any thing as to the learning of the old men that made our church-books, yet to me it ap-

pears sure and certain, as they say in the next article, That the condition of man, after the fall of Adam, is such, that he *cannot turn and prepare himself* by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God; wherefore, we have *no power* to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, “without the grace of God, by Christ, preventing us, that we may have a good-will, and working with us when we have that good-will.” And though, I confess, I have not minded the prayers so much as I should have done, yet I remember having heard you say from the desk, “Almighty God, who seeth we have *no power* of ourselves to help ourselves; and that, through the weakness of our mortal natures, *we can do no good thing* without God; and the frailty of man without God, *cannot but fail*.” And I remember, when my school-mistress taught me the catechism, she used to say to me, “My good child, know this, that thou art not able to do these things of thyself, nor to walk in the commandments of God, and serve him, without his *special grace*.”

Dolit. Why, if you take all these words in such a strict sense, you will make us out to be mere machines! and then it is no matter what we do, for I am sure there can be no merit in our goodness.

Far. Ah! why, sir, how can there be any merit in such poor services as ours? I can't help thinking with our *old folk* in the article of the justification of man, that “We are accounted righteous before God *only* for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ *by faith*, and *not for our own works or deservings*; wherefore, that we are justified *by faith ONLY*, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort.” And then they tell us the same in the homily “of the salvation of mankind by *only Christ our Saviour*,” in which the doctrine is more largely expressed: and there they give a *deadly* stroke at our

pride in that they say; "Because all men be sinners against God, and breakers of his law, therefore *can no man, by his own acts, works, or deeds, seem they never so good, be justified and made righteous before God*; but every man of necessity is constrained to seek for *another righteousness for justification*: our justification doth come *freely of the mere mercy of God*, so that Christ is now *the righteousness of all them that truly do believe in him*, for *he paid the ransom by his death, he for them fulfilled the law in his life*." And then, sir, we may say with a good conscience, "O Lord, who seest we put not our trust in *any thing that we do*." And when I went about two Sundays ago to the holy sacrament, at Mr. Lovegood's church, and (to my shame be it spoken,) old as I am, to the sacrament I never went before, excepting twice after I was confirmed; and then we prayed, that God would not "weigh our merits, but pardon our offences;" and here,—[Mr. Dolittle interrupts.]

Dolit. Stop, Mr. Littleworth, before you tell us any more of the prayers, I must tell you, that Mr. Lovegood is liable to a severe ecclesiastical censure for administering the sacrament to one of my parishioners. And—[Farmer interrupts.]

Far. But as old Master Goodenough has left Mr. Lovegood's parish to come to your sacrament, I dare say you'll forgive him; and I am sure he'll forgive you.

Miss Polly. But, sir, my father talks so frivolous and, *'thusiastically* about inspiration, and says, that the Bishops, and all the clergy, have declared, that they were "inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost," before they went into orders; and I have heard you preach against such *'thusiasts* again and again.*

* Miss Polly brought home with her several other hard words from the boarding-school, that she never afterwards knew how to digest, or to express.

Far. Ah, Polly, you should not talk so *pert* to your father! When I could bluster about the house as once I did, you did not behave so *unmannerly*. [To Mr. Dolittle.] But you know, sir, how very often we pray for the Spirit of God in the prayer-book, that "God would grant us his Holy Spirit;" that he would "cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit." We pray for his Majesty, that he may be "replenished with the grace of the Holy Spirit;" and that "all the bishops and clergy may have the healthful Spirit of God's grace." And at Christmas time, we pray, "that we being regenerate and born again, and made God's children by adoption and grace, may be daily renewed by his Holy Spirit;" and in another collect, that "God would send to us his Holy Ghost to comfort us;" and then in the article of our predestination and election, it is said, that "all the elect *feel in themselves the workings of the Spirit of Christ.*" And in the Catechism, that God "sanctifies us, and all the elect people of God." And in twenty more places besides, have we the same sort of words and doctrine. And to me, it seems, it would be even foolish to pray at all, unless we thought that God would inspire into our hearts the good we pray for.

Dolit. Well, Master Littleworth, if you have done *preaching* to me, it is high time that I should begin *preaching* to you. I have already observed, that our reformers were good men, but not over-wise; and that they may have expressed themselves unguardedly; therefore many of our divines of the present day, and I'll assure you most of them are bishops or deans, or other great dignitaries, have been at a deal of pains to put a proper explanation on their words; and though, I confess, they have hardly as yet settled the matter among themselves, yet it seems to amount to this. Some of them think, that our Reformers had

a *double meaning* in all they said, and that they speak both ways, for and against the same doctrine, at the same time. Others are of opinion, that they had but one meaning, which is to be understood *just the contrary to what they say*. They who are for the *double meaning* suppose, that while some are at liberty to take them in *one sense*, yet others are at liberty also to take them *in the opposite sense*; and though, to the ignorant and the unlearned, this may appear a flat contradiction and nonsense, yet many learned divines have written very ably on this side of the question; though I confess, in my opinion, it gives too much latitude to those modern preachers that you are now so fond of, to preach up their notions; and very specious things to be sure, they have to say, if we let this interpretation pass. I am rather, therefore, of the opinion of those divines who have proved that our reformers, when *they said one thing meant another*. And if you please, sir, I'll explain myself on this subject.

Far. 'Las, sir, you quite stagger me! I don't know whether I stand upon my head or my heels.

Dolit. Don't say so, sir, for I'll assure you we are serious, and we can prove all this to be very true from the logic some of us brought from Oxford, and others of us from Cambridge. And thus, when we read in the article about *original*, or birth-sin, "That it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is *very far** gone from original righteousness;" it is evidently to be made out by *the rule of reverse*; therefore, according to the opinion of our modern divines, there is a deal of original inherent rectitude in man, if he would but employ his reason, and his conscience, to bring it forth.

* In the original Latin, *Quam longissime, as far as possible*.

Far. Though I dare not contradict the learned, yet I am sure my hardened conscience and my blinded reason never did me any good.

Dolit. You should not have interrupted me, sir, till I had finished what I had to say; for I must remind you of what you said about the necessity of "special grace;" that we have "no power of ourselves, to help ourselves," and therefore "of ourselves we cannot but fall;" that "we have no power to do works pleasant and acceptable to God without the grace of God by Christ preventing us:" now for want of *our logic*, it cannot be expected you can comprehend that these expressions are to be understood by the same *rule of reverse*; and that *now* their proper meaning is, that there is a deal of power left in us, though in our lapsed state; and that nothing is wanting, but for God to *second* our good endeavours; and that, through our own proper resolutions and endeavours, if duly attended to, we shall obtain the favour of the Almighty.

Far. Why, then, sir, when I tell Sam, that he is to fetch the black horse out of the stable, he must understand he is to bring me the gray mare. Why, I am all in amazement at this new sort of *larning*.

Mrs. Little. Nancy, my dear, hand that fresh toast to Mr. Dolittle. [To Mr. Dolittle.] Perhaps, sir, you would like a bit more with your last dish. [Miss Nancy directly takes it into the kitchen, and comes back without it.]

Mrs. Little. Why Nancy, child, what have you done with the toast?

Nancy. As you bade me, mother.

Mrs. Little. Why, I told you to hand it to Mr. Dolittle.

Nancy. O yes, mother; but then by this new *rule of reverse*, I thought I was to take it away, and lock it up in the pantry.

Dolit. O, but we are not to adopt this rule of reverse in things temporal, but only in things spiritual. It is upon this principle that our divines have it in their power farther to prove, in the justification of man by *faith alone*, that it means by *faith and good works together*; nor should you pretend to be so wise about the matter, but humbly to leave it to your clergy, and believe as they direct you; for it should seem very strange, that after these abstruse divines have puzzled even the most learned among us about “works done before justification, and works done after justification,” that you should be able to understand their meaning.

Far. Why then, sir, when I say I shall go alone to Mapleton market next Thursday, you are to understand that I mean to take my wife and daughter Polly with me. Is this the way in which I am to chop this *new-fashioned* logic?

Dolit. I am sorry for you, Mr. Littleworth: if you can't understand, yet at least you should submit to the learning of our university divines. I fear you will never be reclaimed, for you mentioned also, among other subjects, the article upon our predestination and election. Now *all* our learned divines can prove that article also is to be understood in a sense which is directly contrary to its plain meaning; and that, when it is said, “The godly consideration of our predestination in Christ is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the workings of the Spirit of Christ;” it means, that it was a very ungodly doctrine, and calculated to encourage the most licentious conduct: that the words “sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort,” *now* mean every thing that is abominably detestable and odious, and only held forth by a modern sect, now sunk into general execration. In short, that the predestination of some, means a universal

chance given to all. And farther still, when it is said, "that the elect of God feel in themselves the workings of the Spirit of Christ," we are to understand, that there are no such feelings or influences; or that, if there are, according to an expression that we are very fond of using, they must be secret and *imperceptible* feelings.

Far. 'Las, sir, where am I? secret and imperceptible feelings!—[Farmer to his wife.] Why, dame, when our son Harry would be so wild, and when he went to sea, and you and I used to sob and cry together night after night, ours was not imperceptible grief. [To Mr. Dolittle.] And when we repent of sin, for I am sure we have enough of it, are we to have *imperceptible* repentance; and when we tell God our wants in prayer, are those to be *imperceptible* wants? Are we to have *imperceptible* love to God? and *imperceptible* faith in Christ? I should wish to have something better than an *imperceptible* religion, otherwise I should fear I shall have nothing better than an *imperceptible* heaven. Really, sir, I am in such amaze by these new notions, that I know not where I am. But as you say, I am to understand all our *old folk* by the rule of reverse, perhaps I am to understand you by the same rule, and that will turn all matters right round.

Dolit. Master Littleworth, it is very cruel and unjust in you to banter us by such language; you know how many people there are against our religion already: First, Dissenters of every party are saying that we subscribe a creed for the sake of our livings, which we never examined or believed. But who would mind what these *Schismatics* have to say against us? for all the infidels say just the same; and as for the new sect that you have lately taken to follow, they are worse than any of them.

Far. Well, then, sir, I must honestly confess, what-

soever your accusers may be, I wonder that so many of you gentlemen should again and again subscribe to all these things, as though you had a right to understand them in a sense just opposite to their real sense, and thus make nonsense of the whole of it; while you subscribe them as being "articles agreed upon by the archbishops and bishops, and all the clergy," for "avoiding diversity of opinions," and "for the establishment of *consent* touching religion;" and which you say are to be taken in *the literal and grammatical sense*. Ay, sir, and run down those ministers whose hands and hearts go together, and who will have nothing to do with those double meanings, and double dealings so contrary to all the common-sense meaning of words, as that all we farmer-like *countryfied* folk, cannot but see how little agreement there is between hands and hearts in all these subscriptions. Lord help us! is this the simplicity and godly sincerity of the upright Christian?

Dolit. O, sir, you seem to be struck with the spirit of devotion; you'll go to prayer with us next.

Far. O no, sir! I would rather leave that with you. Nancy, my child, reach Mr. Dolittle the Bible; it will be more profitable to us all, if he reads a chapter, and expounds it, and goes to prayer with us, and that is the way Mr. Lovegood does when he goes a visiting.

Dolit. I have been now rector of this parish above these nineteen years, and I never was addressed about going to prayer in such a manner before. Sir, this rude treatment compels me to leave your house immediately.—Mrs. Littleworth, I wish you a good night.—Young ladies, your humble servant,

DIALOGUE V.

Between Farmer Littleworth, Mr. Brisk, (Mr. Dolittle's Curate,) Mr. Smirking (Assistant to Dr. Dronish,) and the Farmer's Family.

ON THE EVIL NATURE AND EFFECTS OF STAGE PLAYS.

Sam, the Farmer's Foot-boy comes Home from Mapleton, in the evening, after an Affray at a Public House.

Miss Nancy. FATHER, here is Sam come home from Mapleton with such a bruised face, bloody handkerchief, and his livery all over dirt. He appears to be half drunk: and the lantern is broken all to bits!

Farmer. What can he have been at? Why don't he come in?

Miss N. He is only stopping to scrape off some of the dirt, and to wash himself in the back kitchen.

[Sam comes in.]

Far. Why, Sam, in the name of wonder where have you been, to come home in this condition?

Sam. O sir! if you will forgive me, I'll tell you all about it.

Far. Forgive you! why, what have you been doing? Tell the truth first, and after that I'll tell you whether I shall forgive you.

Sam. Why, sir, when my young ladies were at Mr. Lightman's the lawyer's, at tea, in came Mr. Brisk and Mr. Smirking, and made an agreement that they should all go to the play.

Far. Ay; I thought by their whisperings and dressings that they had some such project in their

heads. But how came you in such a pickle, young man?

Sam. Sir, my young ladies gave me sixpence to go to the Nag's Head, that I might not stand out in the cold, while they were all at the play; and there Squire Bluster's footman, and Lord Rakish's *gentleman*, did nothing but *jeer* my young ladies by asking which they understood best, dancing or making butter and cheese? And then they sneer'd and jeer'd at their dress.

Far. Why did you not let them sneer and jeer on, and go away about your business?

Sam. Why, I thought I must stop and spend my sixpence. And then they began their *romance* on me, and asked how many more of the plough-boys the farmer had put in livery? And I said to them, *as how*, they might have been plough-boys once, as well as I. Then they swore desperate oaths at me, and would make me drink; and said, I should run the gauntlet; then they knocked me down; and as soon as I could, I ran away as fast I was able; but they followed me into the street, and would bring me back again, but I would not come, so they rolled me in the dirt, and beat me sadly; and the whole street was in an uproar; and the lantern was broke all to *smash*.

Far. Oh, Nancy, my child; what a mercy from God it is, that we are not in "the broad way that leadeth unto destruction," and that we have now the Bible before us!

Miss Nancy. A mercy indeed, father! for, till we went to hear Mr. Lovegood, we were all alike. The Lord be praised for his grace!

[After some other conversation, in come the two ministers and the two daughters.]

Brisk. Well, sir, we have brought home your daughters quite safe and sound; though I am afraid

it is a little later than your usual time for supper and bed.

Far. Oh, no sir; for sometimes I come home almost as late as this, when I come from the lecture at Mr. Lovegood's church. And for sure, my daughters can have been in no bad ways when they have been with men of your cloth; though Sam has told me a strange story.

Brisk. Why, I confess, Mr. Littleworth, it was I that persuaded your daughters to go to the play. I am sure it is a very innocent and rational amusement.

Far. I can't thank you for that, sir; for while you was at the playhouse, Sam, and ever so many other servants were at the alehouse; and he is come home in a fine trim.

Miss Polly. But, father, mayn't the gentlemen have a bit of supper for their kindness in bringing us home?

Far. Ay, ay, child, I have no objection against that.—Dame, see what there is in the pantry. Nancy, help your mother to bring it out.

[It is done accordingly.]

Far. Will one of you gentlemen ask a blessing.

[Mr. Brisk says a careless grace.]

Far. And pray, gentlemen, did you ask a blessing before you went to the play, and took my daughters with you; and can you return thanks to God now you are come away; for "in every thing we should give thanks."

Smirking. Why, sir, how came that thought into your head?

Far. I had it from the Bible. And for sure, you gentlemen, can't be so ignorant of that book, as not to know, that you ministers are directed to "give yourselves continually unto prayer." And that all of us should "pray always, with all prayer and sup-

plication in the Spirit; that we should "continue instant in prayer;" yea, that we should "pray without ceasing."

Smir. But, sir, if you take these texts in so strict a sense, how is the business of the world to be carried on?

Far. Why, the sense in which I take these words is, that we should live in such a holy habit and frame of mind, as to be at all times in a fit state for prayer; and that we can be looking up to God in frequent prayer while we are at our daily labour. And I am sure, when this is the case, the world will go on a thousand times better than it does at present.

Brisk. Well, sir, such a frame of mind is not amiss, especially *at the latter end of our lives.*

Far. However you, gentlemen, would advise us to put off these things till the latter end of our lives, while God's word directs us to "be always ready;" yet you ministers are instructed to give "yourselves wholly to these things, that your profiting may appear unto all men." Now, pray sir, if any of the people had been taken for death, and had sent for you to pray with them, and to administer the holy sacrament to them, how would you have felt in your devotions, after having heard so much of the profane stuff and nonsense they talk over at these plays? What sort of prayers would yours have been? Could you have drawn "near with a true heart in full assurance of faith," before a holy God?

Smir. I must leave you, Mr. Brisk, to answer that question; for being co-pastor with Dr. Dronish, among the *rational Dissenters*, we are not in the habit of being called upon on these occasions; but these things should be no bar against a candid and liberal intercourse with each other; for in all the principal points of religion we seem very well agreed.

Brisk. Why, Mr. Littleworth, that is not a probable case.

Far. But, in my opinion, it is a very probable case. And I did hear of one minister who was called out of a puppet show, to go to prayer with a man who was likely to die; and in every parish there always must be some who are sick, and near their end. If you are not sent for oftener than you are, it is because your negligence has made them as careless as yourselves, even to their dying moments; and no wonder that they think so little of the prayers of such ministers who pray so little for themselves.

Smir. Mr. Brisk, I believe we had better walk home, for Mr. Littleworth seems quite angry.

Far. No, no, gentlemen, I am not angry; though I confess I am grieved at heart that my daughters should have been led to such places by gentlemen of your profession, where, I am sure, they could get nothing but wickedness. I always was hospitable to my neighbours; and you are welcome to stop, and I wish you would, that we may talk over matters before my daughters; for to speak plainly, your example hardens them much in their vain ways.

Smir. Why, truly, sir, I thank you for your civility, but I think, from the dreary notions of religion you have lately adopted, you have taken up such high prejudices against plays as are not just; for, in many plays, there are fine lessons of morality, if we would but attend to them.

Far. Ah, and they are all the worse for that, as it makes the wicked things in them go down the more *glib*. And we suppose we have a license to hear all the foolish and lewd stories and blasphemous romances, because they are *messed* up with a little morality? Pray, sir, do the people that go to those places, go after religion and morality, or after vanity and mirth?

Brisk. Why, sir, we go after a little innocent amusement, to be sure. And if we do hear of bad things, we need not practise them.

Far. But do they, whose hearts are good and upright, think that they are at liberty to go after things that are bad? Or if I hear things which are bad, is that likely to make me good? Besides, I am directed to "cease to hear the instruction that causeth us to err." Pray, did either of you, gentlemen, ever find that wicked people, at any time, were made more moral by following these loose fellows, who go romancing about the country with their plays and morality?

Smir. I don't know that we have. But they might have been the better, if they would; for I still maintain it, that there are plays which contain excellent *strokes* of morality.

Far. Well, if I am to go after their nonsense and ribaldry for the sake of their morality, I might also expect to be made a better man, if I should hire some wicked wretch to curse and blaspheme, and use all manner of filthy foolish talk, made up of lewdness, craft, and pride, provided I had one of you gentlemen at my elbow, to give me a little of your morality at the same time. But, I should be glad to hear by what law we go, when we attend such abominable pastimes, and use such wicked language. Have either of you, gentlemen, any right to tell us a set of vain, filthy, romancing stories, and every now and then bring out a shocking oath, and then mess it up with a little morality for our instruction?

Smir. Oh, no, Mr. Littleworth, we did not say so!

Fur. Why, then, did you do right in hiring all these loose *blades* to do it before you?

Brisk. Sir, this is very uncharitable; for, if they said these bad words, we did not hire them for that purpose.

Far. Yes; but you knew they would come in with the general bargain; and all the profane foolish people, up and down the country, were there to hear them. And how must this harden them in their sins when they saw so many ministers with them, at their wretched sport. So that I am sorry to tell you, (for I am an old man and must speak the truth,) you have been "sitting in the seat of the scornful, and attending the councils of the ungodly;" and the Lord help me! how grieved I am that my daughters, whom I brought up in such a vain way in my thoughtless state, should have been with you!

Smir. By your account, sir, one would think these men do nothing but curse and swear *all* the time.

Far. Pray, sir, do they curse and swear *any* of the time?

Smir. Yes; I confess, I now and then hear some such expressions. But then they are only meant as embellishments; and after all, with a moral intent to expose the wickedness of such words.

Far. Expose such wickedness!—Why, what can give it such countenance, when all the people round about come together. *Gentlefolks*, Justices and Parsons, attending all the time giggling and laughing while such oaths are swearing. But what did you mean, sir, by '*bellishments*? I did not understand that hard word?

Smir. Sir, I meant ornaments.

Far. Well, this is to admiration, that oaths are ornaments! But you say, these are sworn but now and then. So, you think, we may go to places where people swear but a little. Now, to my way of thinking, we should be in no company but with such as mind our Lord's words, "Swear not at all."

Brisk. Why, if ever they do swear, they always cover it very decently; they only say *damme*, *gad-*

zounds, and such sort of words. And they mean nothing by it.

Far. Why, that they mean nothing by the whole of it, for it is nothing better than a pack of *make-believe* nonsense, there is no doubt. But you clergy know, that taking the Lord's name in vain means the making use of his holy name in a vain manner. And, I am sure, it cannot be done in a *vainer* manner than it is done on the stage; especially in their profane mock devotions, even upon their knees, which are ten thousand times more blasphemous than their oaths.

Smir. Well, I confess, I wish they would lay aside such exclamations; for these sort of amusements would be quite as good, and as rational, without them. But where is the harm of the word *zounds*? it is a word without any meaning.

Far. To be sure, that is a famous excuse for them! for all their words, in a sense, are words without meaning. For all their fine shows are nothing better than sham and nonsense: but the word *zounds* is a most desperate profane oath indeed. It means, *by God's wounds*; and I thought, for sure, you gentlemen had sufficient *larning* to have known that.

Smir. O, sir! it is only an old expression, invented in the times of popery, when people believed in the divinity of our Saviour, and the atonement;—but these doctrines are now universally exploded among the *rational* dissenters. And you know, Mr. Brisk, many of the clergy also are of our sentiment in regard to these points.

Far. The infidel dissenters you mean, sir.

Miss Polly. L—d, father, how you talk! Surely Mr. Smirking will be affronted.

Far. Ah! my child, I find you have not been to that wicked school for nothing; for so many times as I have told you of it, yet you still take “the Lord's name in vain.”

Smir. Well, sir, I can't see that we should give up the fine sentiments, that are generally held out on these occasions; I still maintain it, that the stage, when properly conducted, is a very rational amusement.

Far. In my vain days, when I attended these places, I know not what I, or any one else, went there for unless to make game, and to kill time, as we most wickedly used to call it. The Lord knows, that bad I went there, and worse, I am sure, I came away, for, as to all the wicked things I heard there, they stuck to my heart like burrs to my worsted stockings; and as to the morality, that all ran off as fast as it came on, like fair water from a duck's back.

Smir. O, but then you did not consider the proper intent of them! for they are designed to show the deformity of vice, and lash the follies of mankind.

Far. I thought that was the office of you ministers; and for sure you cannot want the help of a set of strolling players to assist you in reforming your neighbours. But can either of you, gentlemen, in your consciences think so? When vicious people get exposed and lashed, they are ashamed to face it out; they will never stand their ground. But where do all these sort of people run to? Why, to the play-house. And what do they go there for? Because it feeds and pampers their vanity and pride, while they make a downright *merriment* of sin. And as to the stories they trump up on these occasions, it is wonderful that any modest woman will go to hear them. I am ashamed to think how many different lewd tricks and projects I have heard from them, dressed up almost in every shape. In short, nothing is such *nuts* for them as that which sets them all a laughing at adultery and whoredom. Thus, "fools

make a mock at sin;" and it is a pity such gentlemen as you should "follow the multitude to do evil."

Mrs. Lit. Why, though I don't like my husband being so over religious, yet I cannot but agree with him, that it would be much better if our daughters would but stay at home and mind their business, and not waste their time in running after such *wonderments*. I do not think my son Harry would have turned out so bad, if he could have been kept away from such sort of company.

Far. Ah, that was one of the first things which brought on the *ruination* of my boy. It was there he got instructed in all the wicked ways of the world; and being so ignorant and careless myself, as I then was, I could not have the face to correct him. Oh how I deserve the punishment of old Eli! For "my son made himself vile, and I restrained him not."—Lord, forgive me, and grant that I may once more see him back again from sea! I hope to the Lord, that I may be able to say something to him for his good, and may God change his heart!

Miss Nancy. Mother, have you got the key of the back pantry? for Sam is terribly bruised, and we are going to bathe his cheeks and side with some hot verjuice. [Mrs. Littleworth gives the key.]

Far. Now, all this riot and wickedness comes of these abominable pastimes, whether out of doors, or in, it is just as bad; nothing but uproar and confusion all the town over. While every 'prentice and servant man and maid is tempted to run away from their families, to which they belong; and then away they go to these schools of wickedness, and come home at dark night, fit for the practice of every abominable vice that comes in their way. Thus business is neglected; the common people are robbed both of their morals and their money, while the pawnbroker and alehouse-keeper live on the spoil.

And these are your innocent amusements, gentlemen.

Smir. Now, after all that you have said, bad people will make a bad use of every thing: but that don't prove things to be bad in themselves.

Brisk. I am quite of your opinion, Mr. Smirking, for there is nothing against these things in scripture; nay, there is a time for all things, even a time to *dance*; and we should regard the scriptures.

Far. With all my heart, sir, I shall be glad to come to that touchstone. We are commanded to search the scriptures.—Patty, reach the Bible.

Patty. Why, father, the gentlemen have scarce done supper; you cannot want the Bible yet.

Far. Nay, nay, girl, we have been talking all the time, as most people do over their meals, and talking about religion won't *choke* us any more than about politics and the world.

Smir. We have both done supper, sir, and it begins to be late.

Far. It is not wholesome to rise so soon after meals; and you love a glass of wine after supper. [Dame, reach us a nice bottle of your best currant wine.] (To Mr. Smirking,) Sir, gentlemen in your way love a pipe, shall Patty bring you one?

Smir. No, I thank you, sir; it begins to be late.

Far. Now, let us have the Bible. (Nancy brings it.)

Miss Nancy. Father, I can show all the places we turned down, while my sisters and the ministers were at the play; which Mr. Lovegood made use of when he preached against these wickednesses.

Far. Well, then, let us see: Here is Eph. iv. 29: "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers." [To the Ministers]—Did the play run in that style to-night, gentlemen?

Brisk. Go on, sir; we will answer you by and by.

Far. Why then, it is said, "That for every idle word men shall speak, they shall give an account in the day of judgment." Why, Nancy, it would not do for you and me to die in a play-house; for there is nothing else but idle words there. And then again, we are forbidden "foolish talking and jesting, which is not convenient." And there we have nothing else but foolish talking and jesting all the way through; ay, and if possible, worse still; for if they present us with any good, they are almost sure to make a scoff at it; and as for pride, anger, revenge, and such like passions, these they dress up in such a manner as though there was little or no evil in them, and as though nobody could live without them.—In a thousand instances they represent virtue to be vice, and vice to be virtue, or it would not be so pleasing to the sort of customers who attend them. After this, you know, Mr. Lovegood mentioned that text against "profane and vain babblings;" and their babblings are profane enough, I am sure; and these we are "to avoid." And here it is again: "Let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ." And here again, "Our conversation is in heaven."

Nancy. And you know, father, it is said, "that the righteous soul of Lot was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked." And I am sure, in all the plays that you and I have seen, there is enough of the filthy conversation of the wicked.

Far. But Nancy, we must not forget that text which pins it all down to a point, which Mr. Lovegood explained to us against these abominable doings, in Gal. v. 19—22, in which, after a long list of wickednesses forbidden to all Christians, "revellings and such like," are mentioned; and these are again forbidden, 1 Pet. iv. 3. Now, Mr. Lovegood told us they meant masked dances and songs, much after

the fashion of our plays. And then, you know, he told us that all horse-racings, bull-baitings, useless fairs and wakes, cock-fightings and dancings, were all of them revels. And again, he observed, that midnight revels were the worst sort of revels, because it gave a more convenient opportunity to the sons of darkness to practise their works of darkness. And we all know what sort of *innocent* amusements people are sure to have among themselves at these times, cursing, swearing, fighting, whoring, drunkenness, and every other abominable evil. Fine sort of sights these for ministers to attend. Gentlemen, have you had supper enough?

Ministers. No more, we thank you, sir. But we must be moving.

Far. Why, you would not be running away because the Bible is fetched, that would be strange indeed for ministers. You have been near three hours at the play: We should, at least, spend one hour over the Bible.—Patty, take away every thing but the Bible. Now, gentlemen, can you show us any place in scripture that countenances your sort of proceedings?

Brisk. Why, did I not mention that the scripture says, there is a time to dance? And did not David dance before the ark?

Far. Yes; and he danced with holy joy before the Lord, praising and blessing his name all the time; quite in a rapture of thanksgiving for his great mercies to Israel. Surely you won't compare your sort of dancings to that of David, where God is quite forgotten, and thrust out of the question, and all of you make merry in sin.

Smir. But then, sir, we are forbidden to be "righteous over-much."

Miss Polly. There, father, I am sure that is as much to the point as any of your texts.

Far. Ay, and many a drunken, worldly-minded farmer and grazier has told me of that text before now. As though the Lord was afraid that we, poor sinful creatures, might be too righteous and holy;—lest we should repent too much; pray too much; or love God too much. Now, though I am but a country farmer, yet I can give you a *properer* meaning to it than that, if ever you choose to make a sermon on it. For it means, don't be too rigorous and over severe in your judgment and dealings with your fellow creatures; but let mercy and forbearance be mixed with judgment. I think this sounds more consistent, than to suppose, that a most righteous God should forbid us to be over-righteous. And would not such notions make the Bible appear to be all contradiction and nonsense? while we are commanded in that blessed book, to be “holy in all manner of conversation;” to “perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord;” and to “be perfect, even as our Father who is in heaven is perfect.”

Smir. I suppose, Mr. Littleworth, you are frequently going down to Mr. Lovegood's for fresh lectures in divinity, for you can quite outdo us.

Far. O yes, sir, I am with him as often as my business will permit; and when I heard him the Sunday before last preach his excellent sermon against this ribaldry, that you, gentlemen, have been supporting, I remember he told us, how much such *farcical* nonsenses were against the spirit and temper of real Christianity. [To his daughter.] Nancy, my child, you know we marked down his proof texts on that head also, as soon as we came home. Let us see which they were.

Nancy. Why, the first text was this: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service:

and be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and perfect and acceptable will of God." And he asked, where could be the Christianity of those who were entirely conformed to the world, and who ran after all its vanities; and were "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God."

Far. And then, you know, he brought out these texts, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence," &c. "Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;" for "the friendship of the world is enmity with God." Now, pray, young gentlemen, to be plain with you, though you are so much more *larneder* than I am, is it possible for any one to be more in friendship with the world than you are? And is it possible, that they who attend where you have been to-night, can be among the pure in heart who unfeignedly say, "lead us not into temptation?" and who "watch and pray lest they should enter into temptation," when they seem to tempt the very devil to tempt them?

Mrs. Lit. I am sadly afraid, gentlemen, my husband bears a little too hard upon you. Let me give you another glass of wine.

Smir. Thank you, madam, but we are in no great fear of an answer, after Mr. Littleworth has brought out all his texts.

Miss Polly. I am afraid that will be a long time first; for nothing now goes down with my father but the Bible. For morning, noon, and night, he is always at it; breakfast, dinner, and supper, he must have his Bible. He seems Bible mad.

Far. You see, gentlemen, my daughter has brought home no great deal of mannerly or Christian-like be-

haviour to her father, by going with you to the play to-night. We will, however, bring a few more texts to confirm our point; for, pray, when you was with all the giggling thoughtless set that were at the play, were you with those who were "heavenly-minded," and spiritually-minded; who "were led by the Spirit;" who had "the love of God shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, which was given them," who were "giving all diligence before God to make their calling and election sure, lest a promise being left to enter into his rest, any of them should seem to come short;" who were "striving to enter in at the strait gate;" who were "working out their salvation with fear and trembling;" who were "crucified to the world, who were even dead to it," "whose lives were hid with Christ in God;" and who have "Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith?" Were you among those who are panting after God; who are "hungering and thirsting after righteousness;" who are "pressing towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ;" who are "redeeming the time, because the days are evil;" who are "through the Spirit, mortifying the deeds of the body;" who are "blameless and harmless, the sons of God;" who "let their light shine before men, that they may see their good works and glorify their Father, which is in heaven?" Were you among those who, "in whatsoever they do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by him;" and who likewise, "whether they eat, or whether they drink, or whatsoever they do, do all to the glory of God?" If so, you have all been at the play to the glory of God. Now, gentlemen, this is not the hundredth part of the Bible against such loose amusements; and the Lord make you sensible *what* you should be, and then you will know *where* you should be, and *what* you should do.

Smir. Well, sir, if you admire nothing else in us, at least, you should admire our patience to hear you say so much; and after all, nothing to the purpose; for all these texts were only designed for primitive times. For, where will you find Christians in this day of such a stamp, excepting a few narrow-minded people of Mr. Lovegood's cast.

Far. And so, truly, the Bible is to be no more to us now-a-days than an old Almanac.—Mr. Brisk, can't you help Mr. Smirking out, by some proper texts of scripture to prove his point? Here's the Bible for you, sir.

Brisk. It cannot be expected that my recollection should be sufficiently clear, having but just come from the play.

Far. No wonder that going to the play should have *thicken'd* your senses in regard to the Bible; but to my mind, it should seem very odd, that time should alter the mind of God, and that what was necessary, in a way of holiness, a thousand years ago, is not necessary now: and if we go on, as we have done of late, in about five hundred years longer, even by the approbation of God himself, men may be devils outright. Why, gentlemen, where have you been for such doctrine as this? According to this rate, the Bible is nothing better than an old lease that is now run out, and whose covenants and agreements can bind no longer; and if this be the case, how are we to come at the truth? And who is to draw us out a new rule for the present times? I am afraid, if done according to the fashion of the times, it will be a *desperate* wide one. Well, gentlemen, till you can show me a reason to the contrary, I shall always suppose that good old Book is the standard for my faith and practice; and as God cannot alter in himself, so he cannot alter in that holy word of his,

which he has given us to make us wise unto salvation.

Smir. Though I like your arguments very well, Mr. Brisk, of taking these troublesome texts and putting them up, out of the way of these modern enthusiasts, by confining them to primitive times; yet, I think, the same business is better accomplished among *rational* Dissenters, by calling them strong *eastern* expressions, and representing them as abstruse metaphors; that being born again, or being new creatures, only means being brought from the old Jewish religion into the Christian, which was then a new one. And being led by the Spirit, only means, *led by a good disposition*. And as for all these other strong expressions that Mr. Littleworth seems so fond of, they now only mean, that we, Christians, should not be remiss in the sober practice of virtue and morality.

Far. Now, gentlemen, if you wish me to believe all this, you must furnish me with a new set of brains: for it was but about three weeks ago that Mr. Dolittle was here, and then I was to believe, that all our good old church books were to be understood according to a double meaning, for and against, or contrary to their meaning. And now all that the Bible *means*, is to *mean nothing*. Do any of us think that we are at liberty, after the same fashion, to explain away a book of man's making, as we explain away the book of God? And now, gentlemen, you must give me leave to speak to you the thoughts of my heart in a homely manner. You have been encouraging a set of these loose fellows, whose lives, you know, are generally wicked, and who are so profane in their conversation that you would be ashamed to make them your companions, or take them into your houses; and these are the men you hire to play the fool to please you, and spread corruption wher-

ever they go. Would either of you, gentlemen, have thought it proper to have gone upon the stage, and acted for them, had any of them been sick, and there feigned the character of a filthy whoremonger, or a swearing sailor? Or would it have become you, Mr. Brisk, (for you have a good voice) to have sung one of their nasty foolish songs?

Brisk. I confess, sir, I should not have thought that proper, any more than yourself.

Far. But, I think, it would have been quite as proper for you to have done it yourself, as to hire these strolling buffoons to do it for you. Whether would have been the greater sin in me, to have hired Thomas Newman to go and steal a sheep for me off Mapleton common, or to have stolen it myself?

Smirking. I confess, sir, I wish we had not gone to the play to-night, because you are so offended.

Far. Your having offended such a poor ordinary creature as I am, is of very little consequence indeed. But should you not both be much concerned that you have offended God? Could but you ministers know, (whether you call yourselves Churchmen or Dissenters, is of no consequence,) how people are hardened in sin by your lives; how many laugh at all religion, because they see so little in those who profess it; while they make the duties of religion their burden, and seem never happy but when they are acting like others, who know not God. And what must many of your hearers think and feel, when they see the same man in the pulpit, and perhaps with them at the Sacrament on the Sunday, who was their companion at the playhouse, or any other foolish amusement, on the week day. If he attempt to hold up the truths of the Bible, he holds them up against himself; he is therefore under the necessity of covering all these awful declarations that are so plainly revealed against these ways; and preaching

up in its stead a bit of a sermon made up of heathenish morality: in short, as their lives do not come up to the Bible, they are determined to bring down the Bible to their lives. *That* this night, gentlemen, you have been attempting to do, and if by our conversation you are not convinced that you are wrong, I am, through the grace of God, more than ever convinced that I am right. God has lately wrought a wonderful change in my heart! And I am sure the Bible does not give us unmeaning metaphors, but tells us of divine realities. Through infinite mercy, poor wicked sinner as I have been till very lately, yet now I know what it is to be "a new creature in Christ Jesus." This has made the Bible to me a delightful book; and now I trust I can say, "Lord, how I love thy law, all the day long is my study therein." Nancy, since then, I trust, is born of God. I pray for my wife, and other children daily: I think they must see I am an altered man, though I seem to be called at the eleventh hour; for time with me must soon be at an end. I confess, I have been kept back much from these things by the careless and neglectful lives of gentlemen of your profession. O that you were but better men, for the sake of those precious souls who depend upon the instruction they receive from you! But I speak it plainly, neither of you can be fit to be the instructors of others till better instructed yourselves. I never could keep my son Harry in any order, after he had been led to those places where you have been taking my daughters this night. Though he was wild enough before, yet it was there that he met with his complete *ruination*, in this world; and I now begin to fear, I never shall see him any more. And how shall I meet him in the world to come? I am ashamed of the bad example I have set before him. [The Farmer weeps, and adds,]—But blessed be

God that I ever met with that dear man of God, Mr. Lovegood; by him I have been directed to see the evil of sin, and to seek for salvation in Jesus Christ, and that salvation, I bless his name, I now find, and feel in myself.

Supper being ended, the Farmer asks one of the ministers to return thanks: they are confused and silent. The Farmer stands up and prays thus:

THE FARMER'S PRAYER.

“Holy and merciful Saviour, we bless thee for feeding our vile bodies; but what are our bodies to our souls! O feed and save them for thy mercy’s sake! My dear wife and children are here before thee; I lift up my eyes and heart to thee for their salvation: turn them, O Lord, and so shall they be turned. Surely thou has already saved the vilest sinner in the family, in all the world, in saving me. Is there not love in thy bleeding heart for them also, O my God and Saviour! And if my poor son, that prodigal son as he has been, is still alive, save him, O save him for thy mercy’s sake! Hear the prayers of a broken-hearted parent for his ruined child. Thou blessed Shepherd of souls, seek after that poor wandering sheep who is gone so far from thee, so far from thy fold, and from his father’s house, and bring him near thyself. Have mercy on these young men, who call themselves thy ministers: make them what they should be, by saving them from the love of the world, and all their vain ways; that they may be thy ministers in deed and in truth. Pardon them, dear Lord, in that my children have been led in such paths of vanity by them; and lead them by thy Holy Spirit, that for the time to come they may be the faithful leaders of ruined souls to the knowledge of thy great salvation. Grant this, O Lord,

for the sake of Christ, our most compassionate Saviour and only Redeemer. Amen and Amen.”

The ministers, surprised with such an unexpected treat from the Bible, and such a prayer, looked at each other under considerable agitation, and, after the usual salutations, retired.

DIALOGUE VI.

THE PRODIGAL'S CONVERSION AT SEA.

MR. LOVEGOOD, FARMER LITTLEWORTH, SQUIRE WORTHY, AND OTHERS.

Mr. Littleworth comes from Grace-hill farm, near Mapleton, and sits down in the kitchen deeply affected. Mr. Lovegood soon afterwards comes in from visiting his parishioners.

Mr. Lovegood. WHY, Mr. Littleworth, I am sorry to see you so much affected—is all well at home?

Far. Oh, sir, I cannot stand it; it quite overcomes me.

Loveg. What overcomes you, sir? We should not be “cast down with overmuch sorrow;” upon every event we should learn to say, “Thy will be done.”

Far. Oh, sir! My son! my son!

Loveg. What, then, is poor Henry dead?

Far. Dead, sir! No; blessed be God: “this my son was dead, and is alive again;” he that was lost and, as I thought, for ever lost, is found again, and I trust, found in Christ. Oh, sir, it so overcomes me, that I think I never shall be able to outlive it! But, blessed be God, come what will of it, I can now say, “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation!” The Lord has not only saved me, a vile old sinner, and my daughter Nance, but now, I trust, my dear Harry is a saved soul. See, sir, what a sweet letter he has sent to me. [The farmer gives

the letter to Mr. Lovegood.] Here, sir, take and read it, if you please, for I cannot read it again, it so affects me. I was above an hour before I could read it through: I cannot stand it again: besides, you can read better than I. [Mr. Lovegood takes the letter, and reads it.]

“Island of Antigua.

“Dear and honoured Father,

“It is now full four years since, in a most wicked, disobedient and rebellious state of mind I left your house, and entered as a captain’s clerk on board the Rambler. I confess you might have heard from me before, but I was ashamed to write. Whenever I thought of it, guilt flew in my face, while I considered how kindly you treated me as your only son! how you gave me the best education in your power! and which, I am sure you did out of pure love, and to the best of your judgment; though I confess it laid the foundation of that conduct before you and my God, which must have been my eternal ruin, had not such undeserved mercies prevented, as must for ever fill my heart with praise and glory to my most merciful God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. In that school, my dearest father, I met with those who first secretly led me into sin. Even when a school-boy, none but God knows the wicked devices of my heart. And as “evil men and seducers are sure to wax worse and worse,” so it was with me. I look upon my abominable and cruel conduct to you, and my dear mother, with perpetual abhorrence and grief. I pray you both a thousand and a thousand times to forgive me, as I now trust that, vile as I have been, I myself am forgiven of God. I shall for ever bless the most merciful name of God my Saviour and Redeemer, if I find you both alive, should I return to my native shore; for again and

again have I done enough to bring your gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

“I have oftentimes thought, that by my ungrateful silence you must, at least in your imagination, have numbered me with the dead: for indeed I have been in deaths often. But a most gracious God would not suffer me yet to die, because it was his merciful design to change my heart, and constrain me to live the rest of my life, I trust, to the glory of his name. Yes, my most kind father, it was all designed by a gracious Providence, that your poor prodigal son should be for awhile given over to the devices of his wicked heart, so as that he should be sent far from home, to be brought near to God. I fear the word of life, which has since then been made known to me, is but little known in the neighbourhood in which I received my birth and education. O, my dear parents, I want now only to live, that I may impart unto you how I have been converted from my vile ways, and have been constrained to live to God; and you may rely upon it, while I am enabled to depend on him, that I shall never grieve your dear hearts any more. Christ’s love to me has made me love him; and now I love you most dearly for his name’s sake.

“Your once rebellious, but now affectionate son most humbly requests, that neither you nor my dear mother, would blame yourselves that I had not from you a better example before I went to sea. Few in our parts knew or did better, nor yet so well; for I fear the knowledge and love of God was then sadly wanting among us all. Some time before I went to sea, I heard of a Mr. Lovegood who was presented to the living of Lower Brookfield, and was much ridiculed for his religious zeal; and I remember we all, especially my sisters, used to join in the general laugh against him. Now as this is the common

lot of all good men, I hope you will find him a faithful and upright minister of the gospel. My dear father, do for your own soul's sake, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, go and hear him. [Here Mr. Lovegood is so much affected that he joins with the Farmer, and weeps abundantly. After several attempts he continues the letter.] Perhaps he may administer to your soul those precious words of the gospel of Christ, which have proved the power of God to my salvation; though once, as you well know, to the grief of your heart, the vilest, the most abandoned wretch that ever lived on the earth. I should be glad, if I had time, to tell you all the most merciful steps in judgment, providence, and grace, that have brought my vile heart to repent and return to God; but the packet is likely to sail every hour, which will take this to England; and it is supposed, in about a fortnight afterwards our little fleet will sail for Portsmouth: so that within a month or five weeks after you receive this, you may expect to see your most undutiful and ungrateful child upon his knees before you, begging pardon for all his base behaviour to you and my dear mother. And though I shall bring home but a very scanty share of prize money; yet, if I can but bring to my dear parents the inestimable prize of the knowledge of Christ, that pearl of great price! how joyful shall I be! As to the small sum that may fall to my lot, the moment I see you I shall tell you it must be yours: for, as I have confessed the sin with much grief before the Lord, I now confess it before you; that when I used to go to markets and fairs, unknown to you I too often kept back a part of the price of the things I sold; and in a few other instances the money for which I sold your goods, I entirely kept to myself. I am very happy that it is now a little in my power to make restitution; while

I hope I shall in a measure earn my daily bread by applying myself diligently to the business of your farm as soon as I shall have my discharge, which is promised me on account of the wound I received in my hip, by a splinter from the ship, in an engagement with the enemy; whereby I had nearly been sent to stand before the tribunal of my God, in a state most deplorably wicked: and though I may go halting to the grave thereby, yet I bless God for his most merciful correction; for if I had not been most severely wounded, and afterwards brought to the very gates of death by a fever that attended, I might have continued the same thoughtless and wicked wretch. O blessed, for ever blessed be God for that judgment, sent in so much mercy, whereby I was made willing to attend to the very affectionate advice and prayers of some few, who are Christians indeed in this floating hell! Though before I could, with others, ridicule them, yet in the time of my danger, when I felt the terrors of the Lord upon my soul, I was made willing to attend that voice of tender mercy, they administered to my desponding heart. Since I have been on this island, God has wonderfully preserved my health amidst an abundance of sickness. As soon as I landed, I sought after those who knew the converting grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and found it among the people called Moravians. I cannot express with what tenderness and love they carried it towards me: and it is wonderful, whenever they saw me down-cast, under a sense of the evils of my past life, how they recommended me to the dying love of the Lord Jesus Christ, that my poor sinful heart might be comforted in him.

“Present my affectionate love to my sisters; and as we have often joined together in sin, so may we live to pray together! I grieve, my dear father,

to think how ignorant and vain we all were before I went to sea; and I write with many tears, while, with much shame and grief, I acknowledge what a vile sinner I once was: but now I can bless his dear name, who has so mercifully softened and changed my polluted nature, as that I can from the bottom of my heart, subscribe myself,

Your most dutiful
and affectionate son,
HENRY LITTLEWORTH."

[Mr. Lovegood having read the letter, returns it to Mr. Littleworth.]

Loveg. My dear friend, I enter into all the joys you feel, and can sympathize with you, knowing how much you need divine support, though the event be so blessed and glorious.

Far. Oh, sir! what mercies God is pouring down upon the family of such a poor old sinner as I have been! O that my wife and daughters might live before him!

Loveg. Well, sir, hope and trust; for nothing is too hard for the Lord. But don't you admire what the grace of God truly is, in that broken and humble spirit the Lord has given to your son? and how true it is, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature? that old things are passed away, and that all things are become new?"

Far. Ah, dear sir, and don't you think I have felt something of the same change upon my poor old sinful heart; and for sure it is a most glorious change!

Loveg. Yes, Mr. Littleworth, it is truly glorious: as in your son, so on the hearts of all wherein the converting grace of God is felt. Sin, however strongly rooted in our corrupted natures, must give way to the omnipotent agency of God's Holy Spi-

rit; and how wonderfully does this appear to be exemplified in the heart and conduct of poor Henry! He has not language to describe how vile he has been; and you perceive also what tenderness and love he now feels to all, and what affectionate obedience he is willing to show; how does this prove the truth of that blessed word, "that love is the fulfilling of the law;" and it affords full evidence also, that if we love Christ we shall love to obey him.

Far. And, oh! what a wicked *blade* he was before he went to sea. After he had got linked in with Tom Wild, Will Frolick, and that set, there was no keeping him at home; and when he found I did not choose that they should keep up their *rackets* at my house, he would watch every opportunity to be away; and then I should hear of him driving about to every horse-race and fair within twenty miles round. One time I should hear that he had been fighting, then he had been gambling; twice was he before the justice for his drunken frolics, and night after night have my dame and I sat up for him, while sometimes he would be out all the night, and at other times he would come home at twelve or one o'clock, sulky, ill-natured, and half drunk; and all this was my own doings; for I was wicked and foolish enough to send him to that school where there was nothing of the fear of God; and afterwards I took him to all sorts of *romancing non-senses*, such as plays and puppet-shows, by way of diverting him, and that led him into company which brought on his ruin.

Loveg. Yes, sir, but now a very different scene is before you; your son, I humbly trust, is "born from above;" and such are made "blameless and harmless, the sons of God." "As an obedient child, he will not fashion himself according to the former

lusts in his ignorance;" but "as he who hath called him is holy, so will he be holy in all manner of conversation." His hands will no longer be lifted up to strike the mad and angry blow of inward murder and revenge; but with diligence and industry will he learn to labour as Providence shall direct him.—His tongue will be no more employed in the language of folly, blasphemy, and filthy conversation; but now, his heart being blessed with the grace of God, "his conversation will be as becometh the Gospel of Christ," and such as will be "to the use of edifying, that it may administer grace to the hearers:" and instead of finding him a sulky, ill-natured sot, you will find him "sober, temperate in all things," "loving, gentle, easy to be entreated."—The lion is already turned into the lamb, and the disposition of the tiger and the bear shall prevail no more; and as to his feet, they will need no fetters to keep them out of those vile paths, in which he once ran with such eager haste. No, dear sir, they will rejoice to walk with you to the house of God, to hear the glad tidings of salvation; no other house like that will his feet now so delight to tread.

Far. Dear sir, it quite melts me down! Oh, what joy of heart shall I feel the first time he and I shall walk together to your church, to hear the man we once so wickedly ridiculed in the days of our ignorance, preaching unto us the love of that Saviour, who has "called us out of darkness into his marvellous light." And poor Nancy, oh! what a blessing to her, in having such a brother brought home to the family! for it is wonderful, how soft and good, and gentle, and humble, that dear girl is become, since she has received the gospel of Christ. And when I consider the grace I have lately felt in my own heart, and how sweetly you deliver these

things to us from the pulpit, I wonder that every one who comes to hear you is not converted to God, as well as ourselves.

Loveg. So it appears to all who have been newly converted by the word of life themselves; but when we consider the hardness and the deceitfulness of the human heart, we shall rather wonder that any of us are renewed.

Far. Don't you think, sir, by my son Harry's letter, that he is really renewed?

Loveg. Indeed, sir, it breathes a most excellent spirit, and I trust he will give you abundantly more joy than ever he has given you grief; but still we must tell him, if we live to see him, that he has but just put on the armour for the battle, and that he must watch unto prayer.

Far. The Lord keep both him and me watching and praying; but, oh, how it affects me to think what we all must feel when he first comes home, and finds his poor old wicked father has been blessed with a new heart! Oh, what a meeting it will be! but how ashamed shall I be of myself on account of the bad example I have set before him: how often have he and I neglected our church and sabbath, that we might go on some idle visit, or after some foolish pastime. I can't think that he would ever have been so bad in his wicked ways, if I had not first led him into them. Well, I'll confess it to him with shame, and tell him the fault was mostly mine.

Loveg. It might be better if both of you were not to dwell too much on these things; they were done in the "times of ignorance that God winked at." You are both, I trust, now arrived in the new world of grace, and your business will be with him to press forward to the eternal world of glory.

Far. But O, sir, when my dear child offers me his

prize money, because in the days of his wickedness he robbed me, how can he think I could ever take it from him?

Loveg. He does not know the blessed change that has taken place upon your mind, and he hopes much, by his honesty and integrity, to win your soul to Christ; and as he now, doubtless, attends to his Bible, he probably thinks on what Paul promised Philemon on behalf of Onesimus, the servant who robbed his master; and his conscience will surely tell him, that it was worse to rob a father than a master.

Far. But he says he trusts God has forgiven him, and shall not I forgive him? Dear child! I would not grieve him for a thousand worlds! No, no; I shall want none of his prize-money, while I have in him such a prize as my unbelieving heart never expected. It will cut me to the heart when he makes the offer.

Loveg. Well, sir, we must contrive to soften matters before you and your son have the first interview.

Far. I wish you would, sir, for the thoughts of it are quite too much for me: he talks of begging pardon on his knees, when I should rather go on my knees to him, for leading my own son astray by sending him to such a school, and by the bad example I set before him. If he acts as he says he will, I am sure I never shall be able to bear it. [The Farmer again weeps excessively; after he is in a measure recovered, Mr. Lovegood thus addresses him.]

Loveg. My friend, though I feel for you very tenderly, yet your very tears put me in mind of the joys of "the angels in heaven over one sinner that repenteth;" but I think we can contrive matters so as that your minds may be properly prepared for the meeting.

Far. Why, it is most likely I can't write to him before I see him, as he will come from Portsmouth directly as he lands.

Loveg. Yes, but he will certainly travel in the stage that goes through Mapleton to the north, and then you may tell Mr. Vintner, of the George, to direct your son to Mr. Traffick's of the shop, who is a very sedate worthy man; then you may put a letter into his hands that he may give it to your son, and you may tell him what you think proper, and afterwards Mr. Traffick may bring him to his house, and give him farther particulars; and Billy Traffick, who is a very serious young man, will walk with him to your house.

Far. No, dear child, he is lame; I must send Thomas Newman to bring him, with a horse for him to ride on, and another horse that he may bring his things with him: but for all that Billy Traffick may come with him, for he is a choice lad; and I must do all I can to put my son into good company: for, oh, what mischief was done to my precious boy by the bad company he kept before he went to sea!

Loveg. I think, sir, yours is the best plan; and what a feast will this be to poor honest Thomas to bring such a rich treasure home to his master's house! and Thomas, though a plain, yet he is a very sensible man, and will know how to break matters to him.

Far. And what a feast will this be to me to receive such a treasure in such a son, returned to me again in peace and safety, and with the rich treasure of the grace of God in his heart. O the yearnings of a father's bowels over such a child!

[A message from Mr. Lovegood's servant.]

Servant. Sir, 'Squire Worthy and his lady, with

two of the young misses, are just come into the hall.

Mr. Loveg. to Mrs. Loveg. My dear, will you go with them into the parlour? [To the Farmer.] Mr. Littleworth, you must go in with me.

Far. I am afraid if I do it will quite overcome me as bad as ever. But if you think it best, I'll try, and perhaps the 'Squire may give us some advice on this occasion.

Mr. Worthy. [After the usual salutations.] Why, Mr. Littleworth, I did not expect to see you here. I came to inquire of our worthy minister if he had heard any tidings of your son, as I see by the newspapers a packet arrived at Falmouth on Wednesday last from the fleet in which he sailed.

Loveg. Mr. Littleworth has a letter from him, and a blessed one it is! Would you let Mr. Worthy see it, Mr. Littleworth?

[Mr. Littleworth again in tears.]

Far. Yes; but I cannot read it, it so affects me. [To Mr. Worthy.] If I had all your honour's estate, it would not have given me half the joy I have felt in receiving that letter.

[Mr. Littleworth lends it to Mr. Worthy.]

Mr. Worthy. Sir, as you say it is so good a letter, if it contains no family secrets, may I read it out, that my eldest daughter, who has a serious turn of mind, may gain some instruction by it?

Far. O yes, sir, you may read it out, but then I cannot stop to hear it again.

Loveg. I think, Mr. Littleworth, you had better not stop, but take a walk in the garden while Mr. Worthy and I read over your son's letter, and converse about it.

Far. Why yes, sir; if the 'Squire will pardon me, I would rather do so, for I cannot stand it again.

[The letter is again read over, and the farmer is a second time introduced.]

Mr. Worthy. Well, Mr. Littleworth, I must not say too much to you in a way of congratulation, as you cannot bear it; but we have been planning, that on the evening your son comes home, Mr. Lovegood had better give you the meeting, and spend the first evening with you.

Far. [to Mr. Worthy.] To be sure it would be *desperate unmannerly* to ask such a gentleman as you are to come and meet us; but in our old house I have a hall that would hold twenty such guests, and a heart big enough to hold a thousand more.

Mr. Worthy. Thank you, my kind friend; but as Mr. Lovegood will be of the party, you will have quite company enough on that occasion.

Mrs. Worthy. But Mr. Littleworth, next Wednesday three weeks, Mr. Lovegood is to examine the Sunday school children, and preach a sermon to them and their parents at the church, and afterwards Mr. Worthy is to give them all a supper in the servants' hall. Perhaps your son may be returned by that time, and then we shall be happy to see you and all your family to tea, that you may go and hear the sermon.

Far. Ah, madam, if you and the 'Squire will but put up with our *countryfied fashions*, to be sure we should be mighty proud to make such a visit; and perhaps my daughters Polly and Patty may hear a sermon that the Lord may bless to their hearts, for they are *desperate* fond of being with fine *gentlefolk*.

[Mr. Worthy's servant enters the parlour.]

Servant. Sir, Thomas Newman has brought Mr. Littleworth's horse.

Far. Tell him I shall be with him presently. I thought as I walked here it would be too much to walk home against the hill, so I thought as soon as the

horses had done plough, Thomas should bring one of them. My knees and ankles are *deadly* weak; what have I suffered by the gout! but there, the Lord forgive me, it is in a measure through my own wickedness, for I have made a god of my belly.

Loveg. Tell Thomas to put the horse in my stable, and come in and refresh himself.

Far. O no, sir, I thank you, I'll be getting home. My wife is mighty fond of Thomas, though she does not like his religion; and he has always victuals enough when he comes to our house; and it was Thomas's good life, that made me think so well of your good sermons.

Far. to Mr. Worthy. I wish your honour a good day; the same to you, madam.

Worthy. Farewell, Mr. Littleworth.

[Mr. Lovegood goes with the farmer to see him mounted.]

Loveg. Well, Thomas, how do you do? how is Betty and all the children?

Tho. They are all very well, sir, thank the Lord, except little Joseph, and he has been *sore* bad with the hooping-cough; but madam Worthy sent him some *doctor's stuff* that has done him an abundance of good.

Loveg. Let me see, Thomas; Joseph is one of the twins.

Tho. Ah, sweet child; and I felt him as dear to me as an Isaac, and I should have needed an Abraham's faith to have parted with him.

Loveg. But have you heard that master Harry is coming back again from sea?

Tho. Why, sir, I heard that just before I came down, and that my master has been *most desperately* affected at the news. Lord grant that he may be brought home so as that he may be brought to God. Who can tell, sir?

Far. Oh, Thomas, that is done already; praise the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me bless his holy name!

Tho. What, has master Harry felt the converting grace of God!

Far. Oh, Thomas, [Farmer weeps and wipes his eyes,] but I'll tell you as I ride along, and you shall walk by me.

Loveg. Well, Mr. Littleworth, the Lord bless and support you!

Far. And you too, sir, a thousand times, for the good you have done my immortal soul. [They go home. The Farmer continues speaking to Thomas.]

Oh, Thomas, you will be all amazement to hear how broken and humble and contrite my son writes about his wicked courses.

Tho. Sir, that is a blessed sign; for when once we are made to hate sin, we may be sure there is a divine change. The Lord be praised if master Harry has been saved from his wicked state; for how wild and wicked for sure he was! but, sir, if you and I do but think what we once were, and what through the grace of God we now are, we need despair of none. Can't you remember what Mr. Lovegood said about three Sundays ago, when he was preaching about Christ being able to save to the uttermost: "Who but a God can tell how far God's uttermost can go?"

Far. Why he has no notion how the Lord has converted the heart of such a poor old sinner as I have been. How he will be surprised when he comes home! It quite overcomes me to think of it.

Tho. Had we not better contrive to tell him this before-hand?

Far. That we have contrived already, and you are to go and meet him at Mapleton, and Mr. Lovegood is to come and sup with us. O what a blessed meeting it will be!

Tho. And how much more blessed still will be the meeting in heaven! But, sir, if I may be so bold, how came it all about?

Far. Here, Thomas [lending him the letter,] you shall take this letter home with you, and you and Betty shall read it together; but be sure and take care of it, for I value it more than untold gold. O how I shall count the days till my son comes home! And after supper Mr. Lovegood will give us family prayer, and after that I am determined in my poor fashion to keep it up; for then we shall be quite strong when dear Harry comes home; and who knows but it may be a blessing to my wife and two daughters.

Tho. Why every body knows what a Christian-like family our 'squire's is; and I do think it is all on account of the wonderful good order that is kept up in family prayer.

Far. Ay, ay, Thomas; and by the blessing of God we'll have family prayer too; and Mr. Lovegood says he will make a hymn on purpose upon the prodigal's return, and a *brave* hymn I'll warrant it will be. Thomas, you must be there to pitch the tune; and Mr. Lovegood says you shall be clerk at church next, if any thing happens to old Andrew Snuffle.

Tho. Ah dear, how shall I feel if ever our minister should make such a poor simple creature clerk of our parish; to be sure it would be a wonderful help to me and my poor dear Betty, to bring up our children; but I am sadly afraid Mr. Lovegood will not be long minister of our parish.

Far. The Lord forbid! but why should you think so, Thomas?

Tho. Why I am told our 'squire is to go next winter to London to put one of his sons to some place of *larning*. I hope he wont stop long, for all the poor people in our village are in a sad taking when he is

away; but I am afraid if he was to tell Lord *Cancellor* what a wonderful man our minister is, the king (God bless him) will soon make him lord Archbishop of Canterbury.

[Thus the Farmer and Thomas went on chatting till his arrival at home. The sequel of some farther events will soon be presented to the reader.]

DIALOGUE VII.

SQUIRE WORTHY, MR. LOVEGOOD, MR.
LITTLEWORTH, AND OTHERS.

Proving the Utility of Sunday Schools.

SAMUEL WORTHY, Esquire, possesses an ample fortune in the north. His father, who was knighted when he took up the county address on the birth of his present majesty, he being then the sheriff, was one of those good old-fashioned gentlemen, who used to live at home among their tenants and neighbours; giving a true sample of the simplicity and generosity known in this kingdom about sixty years ago, when no country gentleman went to London but once in four or five years. His mode of travelling was in a coach and four, the butler and groom riding upon two other coach horses, commonly called helpers. They travelled five miles an hour, and about twenty-five miles a day, and in general were obliged to pass a Sunday upon the road. From the inn he and his family always went twice to church; and he had no more thought of breaking in on the solemnities of the sabbath, than he had of robbing on the highway. You had always the idea of a funeral procession, passing through the village on the commencement of this journey; but on his return, every bell in the steeple echoed and re-echoed the joy of the inhabitants; when every grown person stood at the door with a bow or a courtesy, and every child ran out into the

street with a bow down to the ground, close by the coach door, to testify their general joy on his happy return.

While in London, the family used to take lodgings at three pounds a week, in some convenient large house in or near Bond Street, for the sake of country air: even Brook Street, connected with it, was not then in existence, and assumed its name from an aunt of the writer of these dialogues, who was also herself no distant relation to the family of the Worthies. This family, though once very numerous, being found almost in every country, and some of them even of noble blood, yet from a very fatal disease which has of late years prevailed among them, it is feared they will soon become extinct. This unhappy mortality in the family has taken place since their descendants have been accustomed to attend so many bathing and water-drinking places in the summer, and especially since they have taken up their winter's residence in our great metropolis; and may be imputed, partly to the poisonous vapours of the former, and the noxious stagnated air of the latter. The venerable knight (a title in those days honourable) kept a very regular house. Though he was rather *formal* than *spiritual* in his religion, yet family prayer was regularly attended to; nor could any thing but sickness detain the family from church and sacrament on all occasions; but, unfortunately for that gentleman, Mr. Deadman was then vicar of the parish.

His son, Mr. S. Worthy, not less respectable than his father, succeeded to the estate about sixteen years ago. After which Mr. Deadman died of a lethargy, and Mr. Lovegood was presented to the living. Mr. and Mrs. Worthy were at first considerably astonished at what was called *his new doctrine*, and felt some degree of irritation, though intermixed with

candour. When they first heard, they considered that as all the formality and decency belonging to the character of their most respectable predecessor was adopted by them, they were righteous enough already; but, by the wise and good conduct of Mr. Lovegood, their prejudices were soon abated; and after he had delivered a most striking sermon from that text, "Thou hast a name to live and art dead," they were determined to examine the Bible for themselves; and happily for them, (they being bred very strict church people) they found the Bible so well comported with the doctrines of the Common Prayer Book, that they soon discovered old Mr. Deadman, and his cousin-german Mr. Blindman, had preached no more the true doctrine of the Bible, as it relates to salvation by Jesus Christ, than if they had been two of the priests of Jupiter. This truly valuable gentleman, as soon as he received good, promoted it to the utmost of his power, and became a very warm advocate for Sunday Schools. The reader, therefore, shall know what passed while he made a feast for a large assembly of poor children and their parents belonging to the Sunday School of the parish in which he presided.

The reader must recollect, that in a former dialogue Mr. and Mrs. Worthy had invited Farmer Littleworth to attend the meeting, as hopes were then entertained that, by the time intended for the celebration of this kind festival, Henry might arrive from sea: but the Farmer, having heard of many storms and tempests, was strongly agitated with a variety of doubts and fears, whether he should ever be blessed with the sight of a son, now rendered so dear to him by such circumstances as have already been related. Notwithstanding, the invitation was accepted. The farmer rode down to Mr. Worthy's, though with a heavy heart, (to see his son was now

all in all to him,) and Miss Nancy rode behind her father. Miss Polly and Miss Patty chose to walk, while Sam carried some new-purchased trappings from Mrs. Flirt's, which were to be put on in Mrs. Trusty's (the housekeeper's) room before they made their appearance in the parlour. Thus, while the affectation of the two misses was noticed with secret ridicule and contempt, the unaffected simplicity of Nancy and her father was observed with reverence and respect.

A little fracas, however, had just before happened between the Farmer and his wife. She was a very *prudent thrifty* woman, and loved this world better than the next: but now the Farmer's heart was opened. Once he thought of nothing but how to get, now it was in his heart to know how to give. He fixed his eyes on a large fitch of bacon, and after a little controversy with Mrs. Littleworth, who still loved getting more than giving, it was intrusted to Thomas, to be carried to the 'Squire's, there to be catered among the children, as an additional present to the parents of those who behaved well.

Mr. Lovegood first led his family of little ones to the church, where they were seated together, and surrounded by their parents and friends; then chose some lessons very appropriate, and made some affectionate and striking observations as he read them.—His sermon, as designed for children, was concise, but impressive; and knowing that little minds must have short lessons, he varied the subject by the following little histories.

First, he told them of a child of a perverse and obstinate turn of mind, who, neither with nor without correction would obey her poor mother, whose husband had cruelly gone away and left her. This child, after a mild and moderate correction, went out of the house resentful and sulky, and drowned

herself in the brook; from whence he took an opportunity of warning children against the evil of bad tempers, and of enforcing the "meekness and gentleness which was in Christ Jesus," and is among all real Christians.

His next story was about a very lovely boy.— Though once inclined to be very wicked, his heart afterwards became so tenderly impressed with the Saviour's love to fallen sinners, that he would be frequently quite overpowered by the tender feelings of his own mind. He would even ask his parent's leave to part with the shoes from off his feet, and his clothes from off his back, when he saw other poor children, as he supposed in greater want than himself: and when he had no money of his own to give, the dear child would even turn beggar to his parents and others to assist them. He never thought of telling a lie, because he dreaded the idea of doing wrong; and only wrong things need to be covered with a lie. And whenever he saw other children do wrong, he would talk to them very gravely and seriously against their evil ways; and even in his play, if any children behaved cruel or unkind, he would grieve, weep, and retire. But this dear child, it seems, was too full of heaven to live on earth. Before he died, he called his brothers and sisters around his bed three times over, on the last three days of his life, and told them all that he was going to his dear Saviour, who had pardoned his sins, and changed his heart; and exhorted them most affectionately to turn to the Lord, and renounce their sins. He even cast his dying arms around the necks of them one by one, praying them to turn to the dear Jesus, insisting, with many tears, that they should promise him they would; and then added, "I could die for you all a thousand times, if that could but save you from dying

in your sins. O! think of a dying Christ! and give him your hearts, that we may meet again in glory!"

After a most affectionate application to the children, Mr. Lovegood, addressed the parents, observing that, as a parent, he knew the powers of natural affection; but urged upon them an affection of a far more refined and spiritual nature—an affection for their souls. He said, that correction should never be administered, but in much tenderness and love; that every stripe given by an angry hand, from a revengeful heart, increased the evil for which the child was so unwisely and unmercifully corrected. That we should chastise our children as the Lord corrects his; never in wrath, but ever in love. In short, his address to the parents was not less wise and good, than his exhortation to the children was affectionate and kind; while every heart seemed to be melted down under the sweet influence which attended his discourse. Nor was it a less affecting scene to observe with what difficulty Mr. Lovegood, who possessed very tender feelings, got through these stories, and this address! How Thomas Newman nodded at his lovely group of little ones, to excite their more serious attention! How Betty sat with her babe at the breast, praying for a blessing on every word! How Farmer Littleworth wept like the rain, while he heard of the conversion of the child, thinking all the time on the conversion of his own son! How Mr. Merryman, lately recovered from a dissolute life through Mr. Lovegood, looked up to him as to a father, with fixed attention and a watery eye; beholding the lovely instrument in the hand of God, by whom he was reclaimed from a life miserable and dishonourable to himself, and destructive to the souls of his parishioners: and how Mr. Worthy, with an elevated smile of approbation and delight, rejoiced in the happiness and blessedness of the neighbourhood, among whom

he lived with affectionate patriarchal simplicity of conduct; praising and blessing God for influencing the mind of *Lord Cancellor* (as Thomas calls him) to send such a man into that parish—so wise, zealous, and kind as dear Mr. Lovegood! O what a blessing would England enjoy, were every parish pulpit adorned with such a minister, sanctioned by men of such affluence and character as good Esquire Worthy of Brookfield Hall. Long live the family, and may they never want such a chaplain as Mr. Lovegood, to administer among them the blessed word of everlasting life!

After the sermon Mr. Lovegood gave out the following hymn, which was sung by the children, and Thomas Newman pitched the tune.

WHAT children like us have such cause to be glad!
 What children such means of instruction have had!
 Such seasons to hear, and to sing of the Lord,
 While many know nothing of him or his word.

We hear how our Maker from heaven came down,
 And willingly left for lost sinners his throne;
 Then taking our nature, became a poor child,
 And us by his suff'rings to God reconcil'd.

O myst'ry of godliness, wonder of grace!
 May we without ceasing adore him and praise:
 O teach us to know what a Saviour we have,
 To trust him, and love him, and on him believe.

Next commenced the examination. Mr. Attentive, a barber from Mapleton, was the schoolmaster, who was appointed to this office, because he had made a sacrifice of his daily bread, by not following his occupation on the Lord's-day.

Mr. Lovegood was the examiner. Mrs. Fairspeech, who was a *professor* of that religion which she never possessed, sent her son with others to the Sunday school, and he was the first who was examined.

Mr. Loveg. Well, Bobby Fairspeech, what do

you remember of the sermon I have just now been preaching?

Bob. I remember the text, sir.

Loveg. Let us hear you repeat it.

Bob. "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Loveg. And what did I say to you upon that subject?

Bob. Why, that we were all miserable sinners, and should be ruined if we did not come to Christ.

Loveg. Then it is to be hoped that you, as a miserable sinner, have been taught to come to Christ. Do you know what it is to give him your heart?

Bob. Not so much as I should.

Loveg. Why, then, I fear you neglect to pray to him.

Bob. Oh no, sir; for my mother would beat me sadly if I did not *say my prayers*.

Loveg. Surely, child, you must be very wicked if you need to be beaten to say your prayers; but I should hope your mother has a better way of teaching you to pray than by beating you to it. I can hardly think that your father, who is a sensible man, though he does not come to church so often as he should, would allow you to be beaten to make you pray.

Bob. Sir, my father is scarce ever at home when it is my time to go to bed, for he always spends his evenings with Mr. Sobersides the saddler.

[Mr. Lovegood, prudently forbore asking any more questions, lest he should dive into family secrets before the children: but the truth was, that though Mrs. Fairspeech could appear very soft and *saintish* before others, yet she was of a turbulent temper, self-willed, insulting, and irritating to her husband; and after she had driven him away from the family,

would consume three times as much in applying to the gin-bottle as he and Mr. Sobersides did in a pint or two of beer over a pipe of tobacco, while they read the newspaper, and conversed on the politics of the day. As for the faithful and salutary reproofs bestowed on Mrs. Fairspeech, they were all spent in vain; she still continued the perpetual grief of Mr. Lovegood's mind, who hated nothing more than the cant and hypocrisy of such false-hearted professors.]

We now attend to the examination of *Jacky Proud*.

Loveg. Well, what good have you got by coming to the Sunday school, and attending the church?

Jacky. A great deal, sir.

Loveg. What then, do you think you have a good heart?

Jacky. I hope so, sir.

Loveg. How is it then that you can say after me, "we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and left undone those things which we ought to have done, and there is no health in us?" and how could you pray that God would "have mercy on you a miserable sinner?" I am afraid you are very inattentive to those excellent prayers I read among you Sunday after Sunday; and this is no great proof of the goodness of your heart.

Jacky. Why, sir, my mother and godmother both say I am a very good child.

Loveg. But should you not rather believe what God's word says, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me?"

Jacky. Sir, I do my duty as well as I can.

Loveg. What do you mean by doing your duty my child?

Jacky. I always come to church and say my prayers night and morning.

Loveg. But merely saying your prayers is not doing your duty; for many people say their prayers, and never mind their meaning; and instead of doing our duty we commit a very great sin in saying our prayers in a thoughtless and negligent manner.—But, in order that I may show you that your heart is not altogether so good as you think, I must ask you a few more questions.—Are you never angry?

Jacky. Not very often, sir.

Loveg. I did not ask you how often you are angry: the Bible says all causeless anger is murder; for God judges the secrets of the heart, so that whenever you are angry, you commit an act of murder in your heart before him; and how is it that a child, with such wickedness in his nature, can have a good heart?

Jacky. I hope I shall *make myself* better by and by.

Loveg. I am sorry you should talk of making yourself better; for when I teach children the catechism, I tell them they can do nothing without “God’s special grace;” but if you can do it by and by, you can as well do it now; and I am sure you must be a bad child if you don’t wish to be better till by and by. But did you never tell a lie?

Jacky. Why I told one the other day, when I said I was not proud of my new clothes.

Loveg. Why then, it seems you can not only tell a lie, but be guilty of the sin of pride. I am afraid, my poor child, your heart is much worse than you suppose.

Jacky. Sir, there are many children much *wickeder* than I am, for I *never* say *no* bad words.

Loveg. Do you never, in a careless manner, say, O Lord! O God! O Christ!

Jacky. Yes, sir; but they are not bad words.

Loveg. No; the words are good; but are not you

a very bad-hearted child for "taking the Lord's name in vain," when you are told in the third commandment, the "Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain?" No wonder, while you say your prayers, you forget what they mean; for I fear that even *then* you "take the Lord's name in vain." [The child is silent. Mr. Lovegood adds,] I hope you will soon know more of the wickedness of your own heart; but I must now talk to *Timothy Simple*.

[He was the son of an industrious widow, left with four children, who by washing, weeding in the garden, and running of errands, collected by the hand of industry every penny in her power for her indigent children; now and then receiving some occasional relief from the money given at the sacrament, which was very largely attended at Mr. Lovegood's church, together with some farther support, ever flowing to all known subjects of human wo, who come within the knowledge of the honourable possessors of Brookfield Hall.]

Loveg. Well, Timothy, my child, what do you think of your heart? Is it as good as Jacky Proud's?

Tim. I am afraid I am not so good as I should be; but I hope God will make me better.

Loveg. Then you believe in what I have frequently taught you, that we can do nothing "without God's special grace?"

Tim. Oh yes, sir, for I am afraid my heart is very wicked.

Loveg. Why do you think so?

Tim. I am ashamed to tell, sir.

Loveg. Well, my good child, I am very glad to hear you say you are ashamed of your sins; for, when that is the case, our most merciful Saviour will

not only pardon your sins, but by his grace will change your heart.

Tim. I hope he will, sir, for sure I am it is very hard; for when you told that story, though other children cried much, I could hardly cry at all; and yet I should be very glad if the Lord would make me as good a child as he was.

Loveg. So he will, my child, if you will call upon him in humble prayer.

Tim. Sir, I always says the prayers out of the little book you gave me, but I am very forgetful while I say them. I wish I was as good as sister Sally, and as my mother wishes me to be.

Loveg. Is it not a great blessing from the Lord that you have such a good mother and sister?

Tim. Yes, sir, I thank the Lord for it! for you often tell us, that if it were not for the grace of God we should be all very wicked.

Loveg. And should you not be very grateful and obedient to your mother, for working so hard, that you may have a little bread, and some decent clothes?

Tim. O yes, sir, and she thanks God Almighty every day for sending you into our parish; for she says she was not a good woman till you came.

Loveg. But you know, my child, there are many bad people still living in the parish since I have been your minister. How came your mother to be better, while they continue in the same bad state?

Tim. Why, sir, you often tell us about regeneration and a new heart; and that makes my mother a good woman, because she has a new heart.

Loveg. Then you believe that all people who have new hearts will be good people.

Tim. Yes, sir; for it is the Holy Spirit of God who gives us these new hearts, that we may, by his grace, love God and keep his commandments. And

the reason why people are so wicked is, because they have not God's Holy Spirit in their hearts.

Loveg. Can you prove this by some text of scripture?

Tim. My memory is very bad, but I remember one.

Loveg. What is that, my child?

Tim. Sir, it is the text you preached from two Sundays ago: "Ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his."

[The rest of Timothy's answers were in the same style; he was a simple-hearted affectionate child, and his good natural disposition was well cultivated and improved by Mr. Lovegood's diligent attention to the poor children of the parish. *Immediately after his examination, the Esquire thought proper that he should be rewarded with a Bible, which he most gratefully and thankfully received.*

Richard Heedless's child was next examined.

Loveg. Well, Mr. Attentive, how does this child come on? Though he comes to the Sunday school, I never see his father at church.

Attent. I am afraid, sir, his church is at the Nag's Head in Mapleton.

Loveg. Well, but if the father acts improperly, that is no reason why the child may not receive good.

Attent. Oh, sir, I cannot get him on at any rate: for all that he receives on the Sunday he forgets on the week days, and I am afraid it is only for the sake of the feast that we see him now.

Mr. Lovegood to Ned Heedless. Why, my child, how is it that I hear all this of you? but let us see if you understand any thing. Who made you?

Ned. God Almighty.

Loveg. What did he make you for?

Ned. To do my duty, and mind my religion.

Loveg. But do you do your duty, and mind religion as you ought?

Ned. I do it as well as my father.

Loveg. I am afraid if you do no better, your duty is miserably done; but tell me who redeemed you?

Ned. Mr. Littleworth redeemed us last Monday.

Loveg. to Mr. Littleworth. What can this poor child mean, by saying you redeemed them?

Littlew. Truly, sir, I cannot tell, unless it is that I stopped his father's wages to redeem his clothes out of pawn; for after he had been two days drunk at Mapleton revel, he pledged every bit of decent clothes he had to pay his alehouse debts: and when I saw him such a dirty ragged fellow, I told him he should work for me no more till he had taken his clothes from the pawn-broker's.

Loveg. to Heedless. I fear, Master Heedless, your son's ignorance is to be laid to the charge of your wickedness.

Heedl. Your honour, it can't be expected that I should be able to instruct my children, for I was *never* bred to *no larning*.

Loveg. Why thousands and tens of thousands who were never bred to learning have yet been blessed with grace; and you can't suppose you need to be a bad man, because you are a poor man: nor need you be the poor man you now are, if it were not for the wickedness of your heart. Do you ever pray?

Heedl. Why, sir, *more's* the pity, I cannot read.

Loveg. I did not ask you if you could read, but can you pray?

Heedl. I can say the Lord's prayer from top to bottom.

Loveg. And is this all your religion? I fear you

are in a dreadful state. Here, Richard, is a book for you, "A compassionate Address;" and Thomas Newman, who is almost your next neighbour, can read very well, and I dare say he will be so kind as to read it to you.

Tho. Why, Richard knows I would be glad to read to him for his good, whenever I can spare time.

Loveg. Well, Thomas, we will next hear what improvement your boy has made.—[To young Thomas.]—By whom were all things created, and by whom are they upheld and preserved?

Tho. By the Almighty God.

Loveg. And who is the Almighty God?

Tho. He is a most holy Spirit.

Loveg. And how should you serve him?

Tho. "In spirit and in truth."

Loveg. And do you think you do your duty as God demands; for you know at all times he sees and hears all you say and do.

Tho. Sir, I know I often forget God, though he knows me much better than I know myself.

Loveg. What do you mean by saying God is Almighty?

Tho. I believe he is Almighty, because he can do every thing, and that he sees and knows the ways and hearts of all.

Loveg. What do you mean by saying he is holy?

Tho. Why, he is holy because he loves nothing but that which is good, like himself. All holy men and holy angels are his delight.

Loveg. But, my good boy, what do you mean by holiness?

Tho. It is loving God with all our hearts, with all our minds, and souls and strength, and our neighbours as ourselves.

Loveg. What is sin then, my child?

Tho. Why, whenever we neglect to love and fear and trust in God, and pray to him, and serve him, we sin against him; and whenever we are angry, unjust, and neglectful in our duty towards our parents, our governors, and our neighbours, we do wrong, because we sin against his holy and just commands.

Loveg. But if God be so very holy, are not we all very miserable sinners before him?

Tho. Yes. The Bible says, "There is none righteous, no not one;" but I think my father and mother are very good, and so are you and 'Squire Worthy.

Loveg. Well, but you know we must all say, "By the grace of God I am what I am."

Tho. Yes, sir; and my father always says such sort of words when he prays with us.

Loveg. What do you mean by the grace of God?

Tho. Why, my father has taught me this text, "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich."

Loveg. What do you mean by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Tho. That he died for us poor sinners on the cross.

Loveg. What then, are all poor sinners to be saved, because Christ died on the cross?

Tho. O no, sir, for you tell us from the pulpit, that if we reject Christ, Christ will reject us; and that all sinners who come to Christ will have their hearts changed and purified by his Spirit; and that without holiness no man shall see the Lord. You have been just now saying to us, that every child must know the way of sin to be the high road to hell: but I pray the Lord to convert me by his grace, that I may live to his glory.

Loveg. The Lord bless you, my good boy. I am very glad you have been able to attend so well to the instruction of your father, and that you get so much

good by coming to the Sunday school: and as our worthy Esquire has given me some Bibles to distribute among the children who know how to make a good use of them, I shall give you one of the best of them. [Mr. Lovegood gives him a Bible.] Remember now that this is your own book, and the book of God's own writing, to make us wise unto salvation. Now turn round and thank the 'Squire for his present.

Tho. [With a bow down to the ground.] I thank your honour a thousand times.

The reader is to take this as a brief sample among many, how Mr. Lovegood examined some of the children; and as an illustration of what he conceived to be the wisest way to impress the truths of religion on their young minds. He was well convinced that a mere catechism enforced upon a child's memory by painful exertions, however good in its place, was likely to produce but a slender effect, without a more familiar method of instruction, administered according to the ability and disposition of each child. After a considerable time being employed in examining several of the girls, as well as the boys, they were all led through the park to Brookfield Hall, where they found a bountiful, but plain feast provided for them, with plenty of pies and puddings for the children.

Supper being ended, the following hymn was sung.

CHRIST'S CARE FOR HIS LAMBS.

LET praise to our Shepherd begin,
Who tenderly makes us his care;
Who came to redeem us from sin,
And guard us from every snare.
His pastoral love we adore,
Who clasps in so dear an embrace,
The souls that his mercy implore,
To save them by infinite grace.

Nor shall the poor lambs of his flock
 Want pasture, or clear-running stream;
 Or shadow of sheltering rock,
 Or warmth of enlivening beam:
 He too in his bosom shall bear
 The weary that pant for his rest;
 No lamb of them all but shall share
 A heaven of love in his breast.

Then helpless and weak as we are,
 O let us for ever abide
 Close under the eye of his care,
 Feed all the day long at his side!
 He will not a moment depart;
 O why from his side should we rove;
 Or grieve his compassionate heart,
 So plenteous in mercy and love!

After this, young Mr. Merryman, by Mr. Lovegood's desire, concluded the festivity with a tender and affectionate prayer, while his heart was much impressed with the recollection of what a different course he once pursued, before, by Mr. Lovegood's ministry, he was brought to know the grace of God in truth. Mr. Littleworth's fitch was next produced, and after such apologies as might be expected from the Farmer to *his honour and madam Worthy*, it was catered among the children, according to the size of the families: though, when he was carving for young Thomas, it evidently appeared that the Farmer's knife very favourably slipped aside, through a little partiality on his behalf.

The Farmer and his family were next ushered into the parlour to tea. Miss Polly and Miss Patty continued to expose themselves by pretending to talk about fashions, and by making use of fine words, which they ill understood, while Mr. Lovegood constantly aimed at giving a more profitable turn to the conversation, which was easily done between the Farmer and Miss Nancy. Henry's conversion, and

the fears and hopes concerning his return, still engrossed the substance of all he had to say; the anxiety of his heart for his beloved Henry being now the first subject on every occasion. On their return home, Miss Polly and Miss Patty had enough to do in finding fault with each other respecting manners and dress, and such trifling subjects, while the simple, yet profitable, conversation between the Farmer, Miss Nancy, and Thomas, proved their hearts were truly fixed on "the one thing needful." Thomas, however, had abundance of fault to find with himself, being full of fears lest the condescending familiarity of the *'Squire* had thrown him off his guard; he being unacquainted with the unaffected simplicity and real *courtesy* of his own manners, was not sensible that the best Christian is the best gentleman, all over the world.

DIALOGUE VIII.

THE PRODIGAL'S RETURN.

FARMER LITTLEWORTH, HIS SON HENRY, MR. LOVE-GOOD, AND OTHERS.

HENRY LITTLEWORTH was detained at sea by contrary winds three weeks longer than was expected. Many reports having prevailed of storms and shipwrecks, the Farmer's mind was filled with sad apprehensions for the fate of his son; the subject of his daily talk, and now the object of his most affectionate regard. At length he arrived at Mr. Vintner's of the George, and, according to the plan preconcerted, was directed to Mr. Traffick's of the shop, where the following letter from his father, after the usual salutations, was put into his hands.

"MY MOST DEAR CHILD,

"For sure and certain I never shall be able to thank the Lord enough for your letter. Oh, how I bless his name that he has converted and saved such a wicked sinner as you have been! but you know, my dear Harry, I was a much *wickeder* sinner than you; and our most merciful Saviour has visited me with his grace; and now how happy and joyful shall we be together as soon as you come home! But I beg and pray of you, my dear child, when we meet, don't tell me how wicked you have been to me, or I must tell you how wicked I have been to you, in setting you such a bad example. Oh, no! we must

never talk to each other about these matters; for this would cut me to the heart, and kill me outright: for as I write, I can scarcely see to go on, because the tears run down my cheeks so fast while I think of the wonderful love of Christ, which has met with two such vile sinners as we have been: and since he has loved and pardoned us both, how sweetly shall we love and pardon each other!

“My dear child, that very Mr. Lovegood, which we all used so to ridicule, is the dear man who has brought my soul to God. Nobody can tell what a dear servant of God he is; and I and your sister Nancy go to his church every Sunday, and he is to meet you at our house the first day you come home; and Billy Traffick, a most sweet Christian boy, and who always attends our church, is to come up to our house with you; and as you are lame, I shall send a horse for you; so I need write no more, as I hope to see you so soon. My dear child, from your affectionate father,

SIMON LITTLEWORTH.”

The reader must be left to suppose, after Henry had read the letter, what were his feelings on such an unexpected, yet joyful and affecting event. No wonder that under such circumstances he was too much surprised and affected to speak. After some time, Billy Traffick began the conversation.

Billy. Come, come; wipe your eyes, and praise the Lord for his mercies; see what love and grace he has been pouring down upon your family, and upon many more in these parts since you left us.

Henry. What! and are my father and my sister Nancy indeed converted to God! And does Mr. Lovegood preach the gospel to poor sinners at Brookfield church.

Billy. Yes, indeed, your father, by the grace of

God, for nearly these two years, has been a wonderfully altered man; and Mr. Lovegood is a most blessed and affectionate minister of Christ.

Henry. [Still weeping.] My God! what mercies are these to such a vile wretch as I have been! What between joy and grief, how shall I support it! and how shall I be able to meet my dear father!

Mr. Traffick. Mr. Henry, your father has desired that I would mention to you not to say any thing respecting matters that are past, as that will affect him too much. You are to go home as if nothing had happened.

Henry. How can that be? for, oh, what blessed things have happened since I, a poor prodigal sinner, left his house near four years ago! But are there no signs of grace upon the hearts of my poor mother and my other two sisters?

Traffick. I fear not at present; though I am told your mother is not so vehement against your worthy father as formerly; for Mr. Dolittle and Dr. Dronish at first tried to set all the parish against him.

Henry. Why, Mr. Traffick, was not you bred a dissenter? I thought you always went to Dr. Dronish's meeting.

Traffick. Yes, Mr. Henry; but since God in his gracious providence has sent Mr. Lovegood into these parts, we have been convinced that it is better to follow the gospel, than a party. So we have left the meeting, and do not mean to go there again, unless we should have the same gospel preached there as once was, when old Mr. Trueman was the minister in my father's time; so we all go to Brookfield church, excepting my old uncle, who says he is determined to live and die in the religion in which he was bred and born.

Billy. And we shall hope to see you there next Sunday; yes, and it is sacrament Sunday, and my

father and I always attend the communion. We don't mind about being bred dissenters, provided we can hold communion with the people of God.

Henry. Oh! how this again overcomes me! I have had a thousand fears what my poor father would say to me, for my former bad conduct; then how he would oppose me on account of religion; for though in all other respects I knew the Lord hath inclined my heart to be as obedient as a lamb; yet on a Sunday I was determined to travel, lame as I am, twenty miles a day, provided I could but reach any place of worship, whether at a church or a meeting of any sort, where I could hear the blessed sound of the Gospel; but instead of all my fears, God has provided for me all that my heart could wish, and almost close to the door. Well, there by the help of God I will go, and to the sacrament too, that we may all give ourselves up entirely to the Lord, if Mr. Lovegood will permit me.

Billy. There is no doubt of that; for your letter, which you sent from Antigua, affected him almost as much as it did your father; and he believes, by the grace of God, your heart is really changed.

Henry. O, how little I thought of such blessed events as these when I left my father's house, while living in all sorts of sin; and what will my dear father feel, when he sees his poor prodigal kneeling by him, at that most blessed feast of love? Yes, there I will go, and at once join myself with the dear children of God wherever I can find them; that all may know that, by the grace of God, I am determined to give myself up to lead another life.

[Mr. Traffick is called into the shop, and Will Frolick comes in.]

Frolick. [To Mr. Traffick.] Is not Harry Littleworth come from sea? I hear he is at your house; mayn't I step in and ask him how he does?

Traffick. Yes; but you won't find him the same man now as when you and he, and the rest of you, kept our town in a perpetual uproar.

Frolick. Why, I have heard that he has received a bad wound, and that since then he has taken a mighty religious turn; and I wonder at that, when he was such an admirer of Paine's "Age of Reason."

Traffick. Reason! what do you mean by reason, while you were all living together like so many madmen?

Frolick. Well, though his father has been frequently *preaching* about his wonderful conversion at Mappleton market, I suppose he is not so grave but what he will shake hands with me, if I go in to see him, for he was a merry fellow when he left us.

Traffick. You know the old proverb, Mr. Frolick, "Be merry and wise;" but when we were at family prayer, while you, and he, and others, were revelling about the town, you used to disturb us by rapping at our windows and doors; if this was a sign that you were merry, it was no evidence that either you or he, in those days, were wise. But you may go in to him if you please. My son and he are together. [Frolick goes in.]

Frolick. Well, Harry, how are you? I am glad to see you home again; for we all began to think you was gone to the bottom.

Henry. I thank you, William; but you must suppose it would have been a terrible sinking to me if I had gone to the bottom; for you know the horrid state we were both in before I went to sea; neither of us were fit to live in this world or the next.

Frolick. Why, I am told you are become very religious; but as for my part, I confess, I had rather stop a little longer first.

Billy. Really, it is shocking to hear you talk; it is dreadful, when people can scoff even at death itself. You know it was but the other day that young Captain Rakish, my Lord's second son, died, after about three day's illness, of a stoppage in his bowels; and it is well known in what despair and agony he left this world, and what awful things he said to his father for having encouraged and introduced him into all sorts of sin; and what he said to another young officer who came to see him just before he died.

Frolick. Why, what did he say?

Billy. "I have been assisting with you to conquer the enemies of our king and country, while I have madly suffered myself to be conquered by the enemy of souls." And then he cried, "The battle is fought, the battle is fought, the battle is fought; but the victory is lost for ever." I would not have lived and died as he did for a thousand such worlds as this.

Frolick. Well, well, for all this I should like to live a merry life while I live; and be a good penitent when I come to die; and that is my creed. I have no notion of being a saint too soon.

Henry. My dear William, let me be serious with you. I confess with shame I have been till of late among the number of those "fools who make a mock of sin;" I now grieve to think what a bold, hardened profligate I have been; and how I have corrupted you and others by my bad example. I confess, I have had deep sorrow for my sinful conduct; but never felt any remorse in the blessed service of God. While I lived, as I fear you live, I tried all I could to laugh and joke away my misery; but in all my mirth I carried a gnawing hell within. I was a self-tormentor every moment of my life, and I know that none of us could bear reflection; and in what we called our jovial songs, we could blasphe-

mously curse the passing bell for interrupting us, and still continue our rebellious, profane, and filthy conversation; despising all subordination to the laws of God and man, because, in the height of our wickedness, we could not bear the least restraint. And what were our reflections when we were in our beds! As to myself, never could I sleep, till I was worn out by my rakish conduct. While I slept I was tormented by dreams; and when I awoke I rose with nothing but discontent and disgust against myself. The sight even of my parents was a horror to me, while the extravagant fruits of my vile conduct I dreaded every moment of my life. From this hell of misery I made for myself, I was madly driven into another hell—a man of war! There I saw sin in its horrid perfection, without any of those earthly gratifications to comfort me, which I found in my father's house, and which I so ungratefully forsook. I now most humbly implore your forgiveness for the mischief I have done you, my dear William, and others by my conduct, and affectionately request you to seek forgiveness from that most merciful Saviour, whose free salvation I must for ever adore in changing the heart, and pardoning the sins of a wretch once so vile. I now live a wonder to myself, that my own wickedness has not procured my eternal ruin. Let one who has been your fellow sinner entreat you to become his fellow traveller in the blessed ways of God.

[Henry was now so overcome by his own thoughts that he could say no more, till he was interrupted by a message that Thomas Newman had brought the horses, to convey him to his father's house at Gracehill farm.

Mr. Traffick comes in from the shop.]

Traffick. Mr. Henry, Thomas Newman is come with the horses; you must get yourself ready.

Henry. Thomas Newman! why is that the poor man who worked for my father, and the same we used to ridicule on account of his religion?

Traffick. Yes; and a truly good man he is; he is only gone to the butcher's for a joint of veal, to be roasted for supper; for your father says, they must have a piece of the *fatted calf*, that they may all eat and be merry, because you are come home.

Henry. What, for such a wretch as I! [Henry weeps and adds,] Oh, what a loving, forgiving, uniting spirit does the grace of Christ create among those whose hearts have tasted of his love!

[Henry is mounted, and rides home with Thomas, and Billy Traffick walks with them.]

Henry. Well, Thomas, how do my dear father and mother do?

Tho. Oh, sir, your worthy father is very well, considering; but he *takes on* wonderfully at the thoughts of seeing you.

Henry. And well he may, when he receives into his house such an ungrateful wretch as I have been!

Tho. O, no, master Henry, that is not the cause; it is because the Lord has so mercifully met with you and changed your heart; ay, and it is wonderful how *his* heart has been changed by the grace of God since you left us.

Henry. Why, Thomas, they say Mr. Lovegood is a most faithful and affectionate preacher of the gospel.

Tho. Ay, that he is, as ever lived: to be sure, he is the finest man in all the world; and it will do you good to see how your worthy father stands up in the pew, and how, at times, the tears keep running down his cheeks, while he hears him preach the precious word of life among us poor sinners; and you can have no *conceivance* what a many good people there are up and down the country; and how our church

is crowded Sunday after Sunday; and what a many abominable wicked sinners have been converted to God, and how happy and loving we all are together.

Henry. Why, what you tell me seems quite like a dream: it is like coming out of hell into heaven.—But is not that my father and one of my sisters coming to meet us?

Tho. Yes; it is your father and Miss Nancy.—Dear old gentleman! he is coming out to meet you, as the father came to meet the prodigal in the Gospel. How he has been talking about you, and counting the days till you come home, for he expected you full a fortnight or three weeks before this.

Henry. O, what shall I do! how shall I meet him! how he lifts up his hands! and how he seems to be affected! Lift me off, Thomas—I am so lame. What a meeting this will be! The Lord support me!

Under such circumstances the newly converted prodigal and parent met. The conversation was too interrupted to be related. At the door of the house Henry was embraced by his mother. Had he not been prevented, he would have been directly upon his knees to have begged her pardon for having given much severer pains to her heart by his conduct, than ever she felt for him as his mother, when she brought him into the world. Miss Polly all the time completely kept up the character of the elder son in the parable; she would neither baste the veal, nor melt the butter, nor draw the beer, nor even peel a potato; but showed such tempers as exemplified a complete contrast between the spirit of envy, and the spirit which is of God.

We suppose the course of the dialogue to be discontinued for an hour, and by that time Sam comes

up in haste from the vicarage, having been sent as a purpose-messenger to Brookfield, to announce the arrival of Henry to Mr. Lovegood. Mr. Lovegood soon follows, and is introduced.

Far. Harry, my child, this is our dear minister who brought your poor father—[he weeps and adds] to know the Lord Jesus Christ.

Loveg. to Littleworth. My good friend, though I rejoice with you on this happy event, yet you had need of support, that you may rejoice with trembling and with holy moderation.—(to Henry.) My dear youth, we are most heartily rejoiced at this event, and at the good evidence you have given that a divine change has been wrought on your heart.

Henry. I hope and trust it has; for you must know, sir, what a wretch I was before I went to sea.

Loveg. No matter what has been; the Lord, I trust, has cast all those sins behind his back. Consider, by the grace of God, what is to be; for in the gospel the grace of Christ is provided for us in time, and the glory of Christ in eternity.

Henry. Oh, sir, I am ashamed to look you in the face, when, with the deepest contrition, I consider in my wicked wild days what cruel words I have uttered against you, and what abominable stories I was glad to hear, and even invent, to expose your innocent character. I would beg your pardon a thousand times.

Loveg. Oh no, sir, we must have no begging of pardons. If God has pardoned us, we can easily forgive each other: but there is nothing new in all this; for Paul, before his conversion, was "injurious and opprobrious:" we therefore, who have been crucified with Christ, and who have been made partakers of the power of his spiritual resurrection, are to suppose, that all our former evils are left behind in

the grave from which he arose; they are to be buried and forgotten, as though they had never been.

Henry. Oh, sir, how glad shall I be to hear you preach concerning these great things, and about this blessed Christ, at Brookfield Church! and William Traffick tells me it is Sacrament Sunday; and will you let me be there, dear sir?—[To his father] and will you, my dear father, forgive me, and let me kneel down by you at that blessed feast of love?

Far. O, my dear child! don't talk so; don't talk so; it quite breaks my heart; all is forgotten and forgiven already.

Mr. Lovegood, finding that the sluices of affection were opened afresh, and remembering that it was the father's design to establish family prayer on the return of his son, and that he was expected to introduce that very profitable service into the family, wisely called for the Bible before supper. Once he thought of reading and illustrating the 15th of Luke, on the Prodigal's Return, but discreetly forbore, knowing that the feelings of the family, upon a very similar event, were already excited to the utmost.—He chose therefore the 51st Psalm, as being very congenial to that broken and contrite spirit, which was now exemplified among them.

After prayer the supper was soon introduced, hospitable and plain. Two fowls, and a large fat ham, with plenty of vegetables, puddings and pies, were added to the piece of the fatted calf already brought from Mapleton. For the Farmer having invited many of his neighbours to this first family prayer, on such an occasion, chose that the provision should be plentiful for those in the kitchen, as well as others in the parlour; for now "they began to be merry." One affecting circumstance, however, happened during the festivity in the parlour. The Far-

mer, seeing his son's plate nearly emptied, loaded it a second time with what would have satisfied a moderate man for three meals at least, and then plentifully drenched it with melted butter. This act of hospitable affection from the father, again touched the feelings of the son; he looked down on his plate, thus heaped with a Benjamin's mess, and again he wept. Mr. Lovegood called him aside, advising him for awhile to withdraw from the company; and they walked and conversed together for some minutes in a large old hall, while Mr. Lovegood thus attempted the word of consolation.

Loveg. My dear youth, it grieves us all to see you so cast down on an occasion which calls for so much thankfulness and joy.

Henry. Oh, sir! what an ungrateful and rebellious wretch have I been against my parents, against my God all the days of my life!

Loveg. Whatever you may have been, yet of this you may most assuredly be persuaded, that now all your past offences your father has entirely forgiven; and has again and again desired me to assure you, that he means to look upon you as if nothing had ever happened to offend him.

Henry. [Weeping still more abundantly.] O, sir, that's the very thing which cuts me to the heart;—not that I suspect my father to be unforgiving; but that I should have been such an ungrateful wretch to grieve such a kind, tender-hearted parent.

[After a little while Henry's spirits were recruited, and he and Mr. Lovegood returned to the parlour. While they continued at the feast, the conversation thus continued.]

Loveg. Well, Mr. Henry, you can now tell us a little more than what we find in your letter of God's gracious dealings with your soul.

Henry. Why, sir, if all the world had told me that I should have experienced such a blessed change, I could not have believed them.

Loveg. Were you filled with much despondency when you first saw the evil tendency of sin?

Henry. Why, sir, I was not so much distressed from an apprehension that there was a hell *for* sin: what I dreaded was a hell *in* sin.

Loveg. Had you no concern about your soul till after you were wounded?

Henry. Not the least.—I am astonished at my wickedness till I was brought, as I supposed, close to the gates of death. Then I was ever framing to my mind, that an angry God was looking at me, and that he hated me: then sin began to flash upon my conscience, and many evils, which I had forgotten, were brought to my mind, as if I had committed them but the day before. Nothing made me fear hell but sin, and now I saw sin worse than hell itself.

Loveg. And how did you get relief?

Henry. While I continued groaning in my hammock, some poor, despised, praying seamen ventured to come near me, when all the ship's crew expected to hear of my death every hour; and when I began to tell them of my evil heart, and evil plight, they seemed quite to rejoice at it. This appeared strange to me at the first, but they soon gave me to understand that there was no coming to Christ but with a wounded conscience. And then I was directed to seek to him for mercy, while his salvation was my only hope.

Loveg. Indeed, and so it is; for nothing but redemption will do for a ruined sinner. When we come to know our own hearts, we are soon delivered from trusting in ourselves, and on our own fancied righteousness.

Henry. Ah, sir, as soon as ever I felt that I was a

ruined sinner, I was fully convinced that Christ alone must be exalted in my salvation. I had no other hope left, but in him.

Loveg. What, had you no serious apprehensions during the time of the engagement, while your eternal state seemed to depend upon the fate of every moment?

Henry. Not the least. And when a poor profane wretch died but a little before, of a mortification through a broken leg, by his falling down the hatchway, I could even hear him all the time curse and swear, because, as he thought, he was not properly attended to, while he lay in his hammock; and when he was told that his leg was in a state of mortification, he sunk into despair, and, even to his last moments, used the most horrid imprecations against his own parents for sending him to sea, and for introducing him into all sorts of sin.

Far. O, my dear child, what a mercy that my bad example was not the cause of your eternal *ruination*!

Henry. But, blessed be God, father, that is not the case; in a way of wonderful mercy the Lord has met with us both. Come, let us be thankful, and bless the Lord together for his love.

Far. With all my heart, my dear child. [He takes him by the hand, and falls upon his neck, and kisses him most affectionately. Mr. Lovegood again interrupts him, and adds,]

Loveg. But, Mr. Littleworth, your son is to tell us the rest of his story.

Henry. Why, as soon as I began to be better, I joined those praying people, and at once partook with them their lot of ridicule and contempt. We were all despised as the meanest fellows in the ship, though in the time of the engagement they had proved themselves the boldest men among us all.

Loveg. No wonder at that: living Christians need

not be afraid to die, because they who live and believe in Christ can never die. But when you came to Antigua, how was it with you there?

Henry. Sir, the providence of God most favourably and graciously attended me; for as soon as I arrived, I and my comrades in prayer sought after any who were inclined to seek after God; and by a remarkable providence, the town being very full, I found myself quartered at the hut of a poor slave, who knew the grace of God in truth. I could not but from the first admire his mild submission and attention; but before we went to sleep, how was I struck to hear the poor creature say, "My dear Massy, me hope you no be angry if me and my poor wifey and pickaninnies pray to our dear Saviour before we go to bed;" and when I told him that I had been lately taught to pray myself, and should be glad to pray with him, he asked me, "What, Massy! you love our dear Saviour too?" and when I told him I hoped I did, for that he had pardoned my sins, and changed my heart, then he ran directly and embraced me, and said, "O my dear *Broder*, den I love you to de heart, because you love our dear Saviour;" and after this, as you may suppose, we soon got acquainted with each other.

Loveg. I suppose, when you got acquainted with this poor good creature, he soon introduced you to the rest of his brethren.

Henry. Yes; and I went directly, and told my praying shipmates what a treasure I had found in this poor slave; and the night after we all met for prayer in his hut; and when we asked him how he came to know about these good things, he told us the most affecting story I ever heard, of his sufferings before he came from Africa, and how mercifully he was brought to the knowledge of the truth by the zeal and attention of the Moravian missionaries, some

years after he had lost his liberty, and been sold as a slave.

Loveg. Well, Mr. Henry, as we shall now, I trust, have frequent interviews with each other, I should be glad if on a future occasion you could recollect some of the most material circumstances of his story, and the narration of them may be profitable to us all; but I dare say, soon after that you got acquainted with their ministers.

Henry. Why, directly when poor *Sancho*, for that was his name, could find time, he went and told their minister that there were some *buckra* sailors that loved the Saviour, and the venerable gray-headed man soon came to see us; and as I was then but lately awakened to a sense and sight of my sins, the remembrance of them lay very heavy on my conscience; and I bless God for the consolations I soon began to receive from the affectionate and tender way in which he recommended me to the Son of God for salvation. On the Sunday following all of us went to their Chapel: it was a most affecting sight to behold so large a number of poor blacks, notwithstanding their slavery, rejoicing in the liberty of the Gospel.

Loveg. Blessed be God, the calamities of a Christian shall always be counter-balanced by his consolations: it is the privilege of the believer, notwithstanding all his troubles, to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Henry. And so it should seem, sir, for during the week *Sancho* took us to see a poor woman singing and rejoicing in dying circumstances, in a manner remarkably glorious; crying out, "My dear Saviour is just coming for me—he has loved me—he has given himself for me! O how he warms my heart, and blesses me—death is now *noting* to me: how I long to be dissolved, that I may be with my precious Jesus! and how I love all of you, my dear *broders*,

because you love him. In heaven, we shall none of us be cruel against each other, but we shall all be like our loving Saviour, and see him as he is, in all his glory." Thus she went on, praising and blessing God, and triumphing in the forgiving love of Christ.

Loveg. Well, Mr. Henry, we shall have other opportunities to talk over these matters; but we should not conclude this joyful interview without some praises to God for his great goodness in returning you again to your father's house, and bringing you to the knowledge of yourself.

Henry. O, sir! what an ungrateful wretch should I be, to forget my God after such mercies!

Littlew. My child, you cannot think what a *nice* hymn Mr. Lovegood has made on your conversion and return. Nancy, call in Thomas Newman, that he may pitch the tune.

[Thomas comes in, and the hymn is sung; but poor Henry's harp was on the willows; the case expressed in the hymn was so much his own, that every line brought a fresh tear trickling from his eye.]

THE PENITENT'S SONG OF PRAISE.

Did ever one of Adam's race,
Cost thee, dear Lord, such toil and grace,
Ere this rebellious heart of mine
Was taught to yield to love divine?

Vile was my heart, deep plung'd in sin,
A dismal den of thieves within;
Where ev'ry lust presum'd to dwell,
The hateful progeny of hell.

A deep apostate from my God,
I trampled on the Saviour's blood:
I scorn'd his mercy, mock'd his pain
And crucified my Lord again.

How great the pow'r, how vast the sway,
That first constrain'd me to obey!
How large the grace thou didst impart,
That conquer'd sin, and won my heart!

But, lo! the chief of sinners now
Is brought before thy throne to bow:
Surely this mighty pow'r from thee,
Can conquer all which conquers me.

Hail, dearest Lord, my choicest love!
By pity drawn from realms above!
Eternal praise to Love Divine,
That won a heart so vile as mine!

The hymn being ended, Mr. Lovegood offered up another short prayer, and the whole family retired.

DIALOGUE IX.

REV. MR. LOVEGOOD AND MR. WORTHY'S
FAMILY AT FARMER LITTLEWORTH'S.

THE EVILS OF THE SLAVE TRADE DELINEATED.

ABOUT three weeks after Henry's return, Mr. Worthy, mindful of Farmer Littleworth's invitation, attended, with Mrs. Worthy and their eldest daughter, to drink tea at Gracehill Farm. It has already been noticed, that all correspondence between Mr. Worthy and the family of the Blusters of Revel Hall was completely closed. Nor could he keep up any farther intimacy with Lord Rakish's family, than to give them a morning visit after their return from town, or some other places of dissipation. A man of his superior mind, could discover, that, while the scriptures directed him to be *courteous*, yet, knowing that "evil communications corrupt good manners," he was also instructed to be *cautious*. His maxim was "to be civil to the great, but intimate with the good." He therefore never supposed he disgraced himself by a familiar intercourse with persons of inferior rank, while they sustained the character of real goodness of disposition and conduct. Mr. Lovegood, as we naturally suppose, was invited to be one of the party. Mrs. Lovegood, ever attentive to her domestic concerns, and burdened with the *large* care of a *little* family, though the sincere wish of all parties, could seldom attend on these occasions.

Mr. and Mrs. Worthy and Mr. Lovegood made it

a point to come early, as they wished for some conversation with the newly converted prodigal, as also to gain some information respecting the poor negroes in Antigua. After the accustomed salutations, they were ushered by the farmer and his wife into the best parlour, where Miss Nancy had been preparing all things for their reception; and thus the conversation began.

Farmer. Ah, dear! had any one told me, three years ago, that I should have had such an honour as to have our worthy 'squire and his lady at our house, I could never have believed them, when I used to laugh at your honour's religion: but, the Lord knows, it was when I had none of my own.

Mr. Worthy. Well, but you know, my good friend, we were all nearly alike, till we were better instructed. But where is your son Henry? for we are come to hear something of the gracious providences which have brought about this wonderful change upon his mind; and which have attended him ever since he left these parts in his thoughtless days.

Far. He is only gone out with Thomas and Sam to see your honour's horses put properly into the stable: but, for sure, it is to *admiration* what a blessed boy he is, and how loving and good the Lord has made him; it quite overcomes me when I think of it! we seem to enjoy a little heaven upon earth.

Lovegood. They who are born again are born to enjoy two heavens instead of one: a heaven of grace here, and a heaven of glory hereafter. But, through the mercy of God, what a wonderful alteration has taken place in your family, when compared to what it was three years ago, when you were all living without God in the world!

Far. Ay, so I thought last Tuesday evening, when my son and Billy Traffick, and three or four other young men that frequent our church, came

and spent the evening at our house; and Billy Traffick brought with him the Pilgrim's Progress. What a precious book for sure that is! and they say the man that wrote it was nothing but a poor tinker: ay, and a very wicked sinner, as wicked as ever I was, before the Lord converted him.

Loveg. Yes, and what a proof is this what the grace of God can do on the vilest of sinners; as also what wisdom God can communicate to his children, independent of human learning, however good that may be in its place: but that book is not less entertaining than instructive. Happy are they who find they are travelling with the pilgrim towards the celestial city!

Far. Well, I do trust that some of us have got into that blessed road; though to my mind I *hobble* as bad spiritually as I do naturally. But how Harry was affected when he read about Christian's burden falling off his back when he came within sight of the cross! Dear child! what a tender heart he has! what would I give if my heart was but as tender as his! and for sure what two sweet prayers we had from Billy Traffick, and my son, before they went away!

[Henry's appearance in the parlour prevented any farther conversation on that subject. After some salutations the dialogue recommenced.]

Wor. Well, Mr. Henry, we are come somewhat sooner than expected to commemorate the goodness of God in your conversion and return. We shall be very glad soon to despatch the ceremonies of the tea-table, that we may have time to hear of some farther events than what we were acquainted with, before your arrival.—(*To the Farmer.*) But, Mr. Littleworth, where are your other two daughters, Miss Polly and Miss Patty?

Far. 'Las, sir, I am afraid they think they are

not yet dressed fine enough to receive your honour. Ah dear! how glad I should be if they spent but half the time in meditation and prayer they now spend at their *twilight*? there is no *conceivance* what pride there is in all our wicked hearts!—[*Mrs. Worthy and family smile; the Farmer continues*]—Why I thought I should make some blunders in my *countrified* fashion of talk; but my daughters have put a sort of *petticoat thing* round their table, and I thought they called it a *twilight*; but my father loved his money too well to give us much *larning*.

Mrs. Wor. Never mind, my good friend, the mistake of calling a toilet a *twilight*: we all understand you.

[Just then Miss Polly and Miss Patty came down from their *twilight*, and such curious tawdry figures as might be expected. Miss Polly being the eldest, did the honours of the tea table, when she had enough to do to instruct Sam, primed up in his livery, how to conduct himself in his office as footman, the conversation having been interrupted by their appearance, was thus resumed.]

Loveg. Mr. Henry, we have already been acquainted with many of the circumstances which first brought about the blessed change that has taken place upon your mind, though we have heard but little from you of what passed when you was in Antigua, after you became acquainted with the Moravians. Besides, Mr. Worthy is a subscriber to their mission, as also to other missionary societies lately established in our own country: he would therefore be glad of a farther narration of what has come to your knowledge respecting these good people, and of their efforts to evangelize the poor slaves.

Wor. Though I have no doubt of the authenticity of the reports we have received from every quarter respecting the cruelties exercised over these misera-

ble creatures, yet I should be glad of your information concerning the general state of the poor African slaves, so far as it has come within your personal knowledge!

Hen. O, sir! the barbarous usage they receive from us is inexpressible. I have seen heaps of them myself bought and sold like a set of beasts in a common market. I believe many more, on an average, than eighty thousand of these poor creatures are annually transported out of their own country, to be made the objects of this abominable traffic: and it is amazing what a number of these, amounting to nearly one-third, according to a most brutal expression, *die in seasoning*; and can it be wondered at, when they are taken from a life of comparative ease and indolence, to a life of the most cruel labour, and are kept in perpetual terror under the lash of their drivers all the time, with their hearts ready to break, having been lately torn from their dearest friends and connexions, and with no other expectation than to drag on a most miserable existence till, by the hand of death itself, which many of them most anxiously desire, they escape the clutches of their tormentors.

Wor. Did you say more than eighty thousand, Mr. Henry? Are you correct in your information? I thought it was about half that number.

Hen. Sir, upwards of half that number are cruelly exported from their own country for the use of the British islands alone. I myself saw, in the Kingston Gazette, three thousand of them advertised for sale at one time: the importation for one year only, into different islands, amounted to thirty-five thousand; and as the islands belonging to other nations must want at least as many as ourselves, I believe I should have been nearer the mark if I had said one hundred thousand than eighty thousand.

Wor. What horrid robbery on the persons of our

fellow-creatures, and what dreadful murder of human lives! for the conclusion certainly is, that not less than all that number are wanted *to keep up the stock*, to succeed those who lose their lives by their cruel banishment, or who have been *killed off* by barbarous treatment and hard labour. For it seems the calculation has been reduced to a nicety, how far it may be most profitable *to work them down*, as you would a set of beasts? *and buy fresh ones*, or *let them breed among themselves*. And it is well known, that, if it were not for the effects of oppression and war, the human race, in every part of the globe, would rapidly increase.

Hen. Yes, sir; and in all the plantations where these poor creatures are treated with any degree of mercy, they never find themselves under the necessity of resorting to those horrid markets.

Wor. It should also seem the infamous tricks practised to procure them, are the most treacherous and cruel; none of us can be ignorant of the fact on what frivolous pretences we excite them to war among themselves, that we may gain the advantage of purchasing the unhappy captives, made by the unnatural contests excited among this poor ill-instructed race of our fellow creatures, who otherwise have a disposition to live in mutual peace and harmony with each other. How much more would it become us to civilize and evangelize them, than to do all in our power to add to their natural brutality, that we may afterwards enslave them. Rum, guns, and gunpowder, it seems, are the general bribes given to these *artless* heathens from the *artful* Christians, (so called in this country,) for the purposes of exciting intoxication and bloodshed among them, that, at their expense, we may gratify our abominable ambition and pride.

Hen. O yes, sir! what you say is all very true. I myself was conversing with one who had been

engaged in this detestable trade not long ago; and to convince me how many lives are wantonly lost before a few slaves can be procured for the West India Islands, he told me several stories, one of which I well remember:—"The commander of an African ship sent to acquaint one of their kings that he wanted *a cargo of slaves*: the king, for the sake of gain, promised to furnish him: and in order to do it, set out, designing to surprise some towns and make all the people prisoners. Some time afterwards the king sent him word he had not succeeded, having attempted to break up two towns, but was twice repulsed; but that he still hoped for success. He next met his enemies in the open field. A battle was fought which lasted three days, and the engagement was so bloody that four thousand five hundred men were slain on the spot!"

Wor. One shudders at the very relation of these execrable cruelties. But it seems we have other pretexts to cover this horrid trade: we buy them as slaves sold for theft and for adultery; and even their superstition and ignorance are to serve for our profit, while, for the supposed crime of witchcraft, many innocent sufferers are doomed to slavery, through life. Thus we not only fill our colonies with the very refuse of the barbarous Africans, as we call them, (though worse barbarians ourselves;) but disgrace our national character by becoming the executioners of this most abject race; and even traverse the seas for that purpose, as though we had not enough of the same crimes to punish at home.

Hen. Yes, sir, and how unjust the punishment of perpetual slavery, and that oftentimes for crimes that scarcely deserve the name; but till we tempted them with the lure of gain there were no punishments by perpetual slavery. It seems, notwithstanding we choose to cry them down as barbarians, that their

punishments were in some measure proportionate to their offences: but is it possible to suppose that near a hundred thousand men, year by year, can deserve such a punishment?

Wor. It is impossible to tell whether they are punished with justice or otherwise; for there is no doubt they take all that are brought, "asking no questions for conscience' sake."

Hen. Sir, there are instances in which they go still farther. They not only take the slaves, but even by treachery have seized the very people that have sold them. In short, the whole of this most horrid traffic is made up of every crime that treachery, cruelty, and murder can invent: and if any of the European nations were to act against each other, as we do against these poor creatures, for no other cause than because they are defenceless and ill-instructed, they would be set down as so many monsters instead of men. I think we may safely conclude, that, if we Europeans transport full eighty thousand of these men, we are the cause of murdering as many more before we can procure them. And when we come to calculate on the additions made, year by year, to these miserable beings, it has been proved that not less than half a million of our reasonable creatures in the English islands only, and consequently little less than A WHOLE MILLION, including those belonging to other nations, are at this moment in a state of the most abject slavery, torn from their native lands and dearest connexions; if all, therefore, were to be hanged for committing the same crimes abroad for which they would be sentenced to death at home, I question, if there would be any left to carry on this most infernal trade.

Loveg. When one hears of such wanton and abominable cruelties, what reason have we to fear that solemn denunciation of divine vengeance: "Shall

not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" but our barbarities in war are by no means all we have to answer for. Multitudes are confessedly stolen away by mere craft from their own country; and men-stealers are the very worst of thieves.* What a universal uproar it makes in this land if but one poor child be kidnapped from his parents! but in those unhappy climates we may kidnap all we can catch, with the greatest impunity.

Hen. O, sir! they are brought over by these methods in great abundance. It is amazing how many poor children are stolen from their parents as soon as they can run alone; and these *half-reared* children, they always look upon as their most valuable acquisitions; but what must their poor parents feel on these occasions?

Loveg. What can they know of the feelings of others, who have lost all feelings themselves? These the scripture describes as being "past feeling;" but I am told the Africans are remarkably fond of their children.

Hen. Sir, their fondness and tenderness towards their children, is almost to an extreme; though, for want of better instruction, they frequently grow up sulky and revengeful.

Mrs. Wor. Being myself a mother, it is pleasant to hear of their attention to their offspring. I knew a gentleman in this country, that, out of mere compassion, received into his house an African girl, who had been kidnapped when she was very young; and she was remarkably affectionate and attentive to the children of her charge, and they loved her inexpressibly. Pray, Mr. Henry, what is your opinion of the general disposition of an African?

* "He that stealeth a man, and selleth him, shall surely be put to death." Ex. xxi. 16.

Hen. As far as I could discover, when they are ill used, they become dark, sulky, and resentful to a high degree; but if treated affectionately, and with friendship, they are, in return, the most affectionate and kind: a proof of this you have in a variety of instances. Where a planter uses them with lenity as a family of his fellow-creatures, though still his slaves, they would fight and die for him. I heard of an instance of a worthy gentleman, who bought a young slave for his travelling-servant, designing when he came of age to give him his liberty. And when he told him he was no longer his slave, and that he was at liberty to leave him as soon as he pleased, he cried out with many tears, "Me leave you, my dear massey, me no leave you, no never; me no want better wages dan to serve my dear massey; if you turn me out of one door, me come in at de oder; me never leave my dear massey; no never, never."

Wor. What extreme cruelty, to injure and enslave a race of our fellow creatures, whose minds are capable of such noble and generous sensations!

Hen. Yes, and farther evidence we have of this in the love they bear towards their ministers, who, with remarkable affection and attention, preach to them the merciful love of God our Saviour towards mankind, and the tender love we ought to show towards each other for the Saviour's sake. In their public meetings they appear to me to resemble a swarm of bees fixing around the queen bee of the hive, all hanging upon her. Her life is their life, and her death is their death. They have an uncommon attachment to their ministers, and all of them seem to be drawn by a sort of silken cord of affection, which they have neither power nor inclination to resist. They and their ministers with them give you quite the idea of artless shepherds with their harmless flocks. To be sure there is a diffe-

rence evidently between them, yet it is amazing the good which has been done among them by the introduction of the gospel; and many of the planters see so much of the good effects of it, that they do all in their power to encourage and promote such preaching on their plantations, and will give a much greater price for a Christian slave, than for another.

Loveg. Well, Mr. Henry, and just so we should all cleave around the blessed person of the Chief Shepherd, and then we shall prove the truth of the proverb, "They are well kept whom the Lord keeps:" but some people will say, in vindication of this trade, that the negroes are better off in a state of slavery in the West Indies than in a state of freedom among themselves; though we have but little proof of it from what has hitherto been noticed.

Hen. Under some accidental circumstances, where their owners are merciful and humane, I confess their situation may be but little worse, if quite so bad, as some of the peasantry in our own country; being allowed a decent plat of ground for their own cultivation and support. But they have minds as well as ourselves; and they must still feel they are slaves, and that all their happiness rests merely on the uncertain circumstance, whether their master is a man or a brute. In many instances, to my certain knowledge, their situation is rendered far more miserable than if they were brutes themselves. Their food is so coarse and bad, that nothing but necessity could compel them to eat it; while their labour and their punishments are severe and cruel. They have an expression among themselves, that they are fed with "a fish with one eye:" that is, a herring split asunder to serve two of them, with the little they can raise among themselves. As to their punishments, I am told, some of them have been tormented with the thumb screw; one was tortured in an iron coffin

filled with holes, placed close to a fire; another I heard of, who was suspended in an iron cage, to be eaten by ravenous birds of prey, and lived some days in that misery; and many have been entirely worked and whipped to death by cruel masters.

Loveg. How can a God of mercy bear with a nation so completely vile! but I trust there are the righteous among us, who will still save our land. But I was told by a very worthy Moravian minister, who called upon me a few weeks ago in his way to their settlement in Fulneck, that their situation has been softened of late.

Hen. Yes, sir; as soon as they heard that a vote in parliament had been passed for the abolition of the slave trade, they became less cruel in their punishments, and enacted laws in their favour; but these laws cannot be very well observed while no negro is allowed to give evidence against a white man. Nothing could so effectually prevent these calamities, as an abolition of the trade itself, as it relates to fresh importations; as by this step it would be rendered absolutely necessary to use them with mercy, that they may increase among themselves. And it has been proved to demonstration, that such a step would be not less advantageous to the interest of the nation, than to the cause of humanity.

Wor. Why, then the very best that can be said, is, that they are taken out of a bad state and put into another by *us Christians*, as we are called, abundantly worse. But what farther proof need we of this, than that, after they have been conquered or kidnapped, they are torn from their families and tenderest connexions, and shipped on board those horrid prisons provided for their transportation, and there chained, man to man; and, till of late, so closely confined, that many of them were positively killed by

their most cruel confinement; and if they do not now die so fast as formerly, by being crowded together,* yet this cannot prevent them from dying of broken hearts; while the survivors, after they are landed, have nothing before them but perpetual slavery, there to receive perhaps no better treatment than what you, Mr. Littleworth, would give to an ox or a horse, because you are afraid of losing your profits by losing your beast.

Far. Well, now I can assure your honour, that though for many years I have been such a *neglectful* sinner about the state of my soul, yet I never could bear to see any dumb creature in misery; many and many a time in my youthful days have I set up half the night when a cow was likely to calve. Ay, and the poor oxen, because I love to take notice of them and feed them, and give them a pat when they return from plough, it is to *admiration* how well they know me, and how fond they seem to be of me; and I have felt more of this since I have known the Lord than ever I did before.

Mrs. Littleworth. To be sure Mr. Littleworth is very tender about dumb creatures, he would not let our old house dog, Watch, be killed for ever so long a time, though he got so dirty and nasty; and then he would send to the *doctor's* for some strong *sleeping stuff*, that he might not know when he died.

Loveg. Well, Mrs. Littleworth, this is a full proof of the excellency of real Christianity; nothing like the love of Christ to soften our hard hearts and fill us with universal love, not only towards each other, but also to every creature of God that is innocent and useful in its kind.

* I am told that the law on this point is now most shamefully evaded.

Miss Polly. Is your honour's tea sweet enough?
(*To Mrs. Worthy and daughter.*) Madam and Miss,
I hope I make it to your liking.

Wor. O yes, Miss Polly, and if, like some good people, I could have conceived that the remedy was in any wise likely to be proportionate to the disease, knowing so well the selfishness of mankind, I had never touched another lump of sugar while I live.
(*To Henry.*) But, Mr. Henry, what farther do you know about the situation of these poor slaves during what is called the Middle Passage.

Hen. Why, sir, while we were lying off Jamaica, I saw one of those horrid African traders land its miserable cargo, and afterwards, being in his majesty's service, was permitted to go on board.

Wor. Why, then you know a deal about it.

Hen. Sir, I have known enough to make my blood run cold.

Wor. Did you see these poor creatures landed, and afterwards sold?

Hen. O yes, sir, I saw it! And as far as I could understand it, nothing can equal the art, excepting the cruelty exercised against these ignominious sufferers on that occasion, for the purposes of our luxury and pride. When a ship, *full slaved*, as they call it, appears off shore, all are alert. Sometimes they are sold on board, and then, like a set of criminals, condemned to be hanged in our own land, who have their irons knocked off before the halter is fixed upon their necks, they are washed, shaved, and dressed, and their skins oiled in order to give them a youthful and healthy look. The tricks of *horse jockeys* in this country are never to be compared to the tricks of the *slave jockeys* in the West Indies. Every art is used to shave and dress them in such a manner, as to hide every gray hair, and all appearances of age. And, till of late, a most horrid

scramble for these poor creatures used to take place. The general bargain being struck, these prizes of blood are exhibited, and then all are left to avail themselves, at a signal given, to seize the best slaves they can procure.

Worthy. What must these poor creatures have thought of such a scramble? If they thought of our general character, they must have supposed that Christians are devils, and that Christianity was forged in hell. But how are they disposed of now?

Hen. They are brought on shore, while the most knavish tricks are still practised by these dealers in human flesh. O, sir, this was a sight that cut me to the heart beyond whatever I saw before!

[Here Henry drops a tear, the Farmer catches the sympathetic flame, and says to Mr. Lovegood,]

Far. Dear sir, what a heart the Lord has given my dear child! Who could have thought it, when we all know what a wicked sinner he was but a little time ago?

[Mrs. Littleworth is also very much affected, and addresses Mr. Lovegood.]

Mrs. Littlew. Well, sir, I must confess, that Henry is a charming boy since he has *taken to religion*. I wish, with all my heart, I was like him. (*To her husband.*) And, husband, if I have been cross with you about religion, I hope you'll forgive me, for I know I have done wrong.

Littlew. (*Quite overcome.*) O, my dear wife, what joy it will be for me to travel with you towards the celestial city, as Master Bunyan calls it, now as we are coming towards the latter end of our lives!

[Mr. and Mrs. Worthy, and Mr. Lovegood were so affected at this turn of the conversation, that for awhile it was discontinued; the writer also having been somewhat affected, as the reporter of these events, begs thus to close the first part of the present Dialogue, which, directly as time permits, he purposes, by the blessing of God, to re-assume.]

DIALOGUE X.

The Evils of the Slave Trade farther delineated.

DURING the interval of silence created by the affectionate and sympathetic feelings of the company, the tea-table was cleared, fresh coals were put upon the fire, the hearth was swept up, the curtains were let down, the mould candles, bought on purpose for this occasion, were lighted, Miss Polly having put a very nice piece of fringed paper round the bottoms of them, on account of their fine company; and thus the conversation recommenced.

Wor. I am so much interested in this most affecting narration, that I should be glad, when your spirits are sufficiently recruited, if you could but tell me, how these poor slaves behaved themselves when they were thus exposed to sale, and what you saw on that horrid occasion.

Hen. Notwithstanding every art to set them off to the best of their power, and to make them look as cheerful as they can, by their flattering promises, yet many of them appeared to me as if their hearts were ready to break with grief and despair, while their purchasers, with the utmost indifference, examined them one after another, as people would a parcel of horses at a fair. Yes, and they talked of a *damaged* slave, as we do of a *damaged* horse, while some of them wanted *working* slaves, and others of them *breeding* slaves; for all the children born in slavery are not, according to the law of nature, the

property of their parents, but of their owners; yes, and when these planters and their overseers have children by these poor negroes, instead of having any regard to the offspring of their vicious passions, they will suffer even these their own children to be bred up in slavery like others. I remember hearing a story of this sort which affected me exceedingly.

Wor. If it be not an improper question to ask before the company now present, what was the story?

Hen. Why, sir, one came to the trader for a *breeding slave*; and he presented him to one who looked very sickly and weak. The trader told him that he could answer for that girl, as she was with child when he bought her; that they were in hopes to have had the husband too, who was a fine young fellow, but he being terribly resolute in resisting as long as he could, while they were *breaking up* their town, they were obliged to kill him; that about the middle of the passage the girl miscarried, and that it had been a considerable expense to *keep her alive*; that she was a strong healthy girl, and would do either for *breeding* or *labour*, provided she did not die of the *sulks*.

Loveg. Or, in other words, die of a broken heart, through the barbarous usage of these monsters.

Hen. Yes, sir, it means all that; for take whatever care you will of them, which a captain will naturally do for his own interest, it is amazing how many of them die one after another. All attempts to air them upon the deck, to make them dance even by the lash of a whip, against their wills, for the sake of giving them exercise, that their health may be preserved can be of no avail; they are made quite sick at heart, and even when they have been forced to take food against their wills, they have immediately sickened and again cast it up; and it is supposed

principally from this cause, one-third of them actually die on the passage. You may judge how miserable they are, when they are obliged to be watched very closely, lest they should destroy themselves to get rid of their misery with their lives, which many have done by throwing themselves overboard, or by other methods, when they had it in their power; but the case of another poor family affected me still more.

Wor. What was that, Mr. Henry?

Mrs. Wor. Really, Mr. Henry, your stories are so affecting about these poor creatures, that I do not know if I shall have sufficient resolution to sit and hear them. My poor daughter seems quite overcome by it already.

Miss Wor. Yes, ma'am, but if you please, I should like to hear it, as it makes me thankful to think how happy we are in this country in comparison of others.

Wor. But it is by no means to our credit, while we are so tenacious of liberty in our own land, that we should be allowed to entail the curse of slavery upon others; and for no other reason, as I can find, but because they are of a different complexion to ourselves. All this is sad selfish work. But let us try if we cannot hear your other story.

Hen. Why, sir, a man and his wife, each of them I suppose between thirty and forty, and two fine-looking boys, the one about twelve, the other I should judge two years younger, all one family, were taken captives in one of their horrid *sham* wars. To keep them from having the *sulks*, it seems it was promised them that they should be all *sold in one lot*; but the trader having met with a rich planter who wanted some hearty boy slaves, finding he could make the best bargain of them by selling them separate, had them all four at a distance from the rest:

soon afterwards a *conductor** came to drag the purchased children from their parents! As soon as they perceived this cruel separation was determined, the whole family ran into each other's arms, and embraced one another in such a manner as that they could scarcely be torn asunder. At length the boys were compelled to go to the destined place of their slavery, while the parents appeared like two creatures perfectly distracted with grief; for they had now lost their last miserable consolation through life, that they might only live and die together, though in a state of cruel slavery. But I saw another scene of the like sort that affected me more than either of the former.

Far. Well, well, to be sure it is most dreadful bad. I wonder that his Majesty does not put it down, for they say, (God bless him!) he is as good a sort of a gentleman in himself as ever lived, and that he loves to make every one happy that is about him. It comes to my mind, that when your honour goes to London, could you but call on the Lord *Cancellor*, the good gentleman who gave our minister the living, and he was to go and tell the king *the rights of it*, he would soon put it down.

Loveg. (smiling) O but the king cannot act without the consent of his parliament, otherwise I dare say, had he his own will in this respect, he would make others as happy as himself.

Far. Ay, so I dare say, for they say he speaks *mighty good natur'dly* to every body, and that he diverts himself by doing something in our way. Now I like him wonderfully for that.

Wor. And so do I too, for I think it bespeaks a simplicity and goodness of disposition, which would be an ornament to the greatest monarch upon the

* The reader is desired to notice what soft expressions are invented to take off the odium from the agents of this horrid traffic.

earth; and why should not a king divert himself as he likes best? I am sure a little farming is both innocent and instructive. Indeed I know not what his Majesty could better patronise, as the strength and wealth of the nation so much depend on it. Better be fond of the plough than the play-house.

Far. Why, but if our *Parliament men* can put down these bad ways, I wonder they don't see to it.

Wor. Alas! as it happens, there is a deal of self-interestedness stands in the way.

Far. Well, I wish with all my heart your honour would but stand to be one of our *parliament men* for Mapleton. I am sure you would do all in your power to put it down. I remember there was a *main bustle* made against these wicked ways some time ago, but that did not *wind up* so well as it should.

Wor. Indeed if it was in my power to remove these evils, it would soon be done; but as it is a difficult thing to get into parliament with a clear conscience, through the drunkenness and wickedness which in general abound at the time of an election, I had rather spend my days in retirement; and do some little good among my neighbours in the country, than waste half my time in London in attending parliament. (*To Henry.*) But, Mr. Henry, we must see if we cannot muster up courage to hear your other story.

Hen. Oh, sir, as I was looking on upon these miserable creatures, I saw a poor girl among the rest sobbing and crying in the deepest distress, and at last she quite fainted away. The captain ordered her to be carried off to a distance. A young man slave, who was standing by, was not less affected than herself; and he, it seems, was brought over from the same country about three years before. Seeing the young woman in that condition, he fell down at the feet of the man who had the care of her, and kissed

them several times, begging, as for his life, that he might go and speak to her. At length he was permitted. He ran to her with astonishing eagerness, embraced and kissed her several times, crying out, O my sister, Ora! O my dear sister, Ora! I was so affected by this scene, that I had it upon my mind sleeping and waking for several nights and days afterwards.

Mrs. Wor. Indeed, Mr. Henry, the story seems to have been too much for us all. I am sure it has been too much for me; but do you know what became of them afterwards?

Hen. Why, madam, as soon as the captain's man, who had the care of the young woman, perceived that she and the young man were brother and sister, although inured to these scenes of misery, he could not help dropping a tear or two of compassion with the rest of us. After the girl was somewhat recovered, they were left to converse together. The farther particulars of this history I could not learn, but I'll warrant it was tragical enough. After this, however, the case was made known to the owner, when, according to the true spirit of the trade, lest the brother and sister should both of them *take the sulks*, so as to endanger their labour, or perhaps the loss of their lives by their mutual grief for each other, it was determined it should be contrived, if possible, that they might both live together on the same plantation. After some difficulty, it seems this was accomplished, and when they were informed of this event, to see how they leapt for joy, how they embraced and kissed each other, while they went along arm in arm to the plantation which was to be the destined place of their labour, was not a less affecting scene than the former.

Loveg. But, oh, what must the parents of these two affectionate creatures have felt on the loss of

such children! (*To Mr. Worthy.*) What should you and I feel, sir, if we were to be bereaved of our children in such an unmerciful manner?

Wor. Oh it is too much to be thought of. (*To Henry.*) Indeed, Mr. Henry, I think you must discontinue your stories, for Mrs. Worthy seems more affected than myself, and my poor daughter is more overcome than either of us; and as to Mr. Lovegood, you see how much he feels on the subject, though as yet you have given us nothing of the history of poor Sancho, which you say, is as affecting as any of the former. I think for the present we have heard as much as we can bear, and that the rest of it must be deferred till another opportunity.

Hen. It is not only very affecting, but equally as improving; for he told me a lovely story of his conversion to the knowledge and grace of the gospel by the Moravian Missionaries.

Mrs. Wor. What can be the excuse for such disgraceful and abominable cruelties against our fellow-creatures?

Hen. Why, madam, we have been frequently told by some that they are scarcely to be esteemed as our fellow-creatures, but a species of beings considerably below us.

Wor. (*fired with holy indignation.*) Is it possible to admit such a thought for a moment? Can they be worse brutes naturally than ourselves? What a dishonour in us to carry on such an abominable traffic, and for others to attempt to vindicate, or even to palliate it, when every principle belonging to it is founded upon *incurable injustice!* For it appears to me, admitting their argument for the moment, if it can be proved that their natural understandings are in a small degree inferior to our own, are we from thence to infer that we have a right to

set them at variance among themselves, that we may kidnap, rob, and murder, as we like best? and are we to set the example to all Europe, by being the first and principal transgressors, that we may avail ourselves annually of more than twenty thousand slaves for the sake of our luxuries; and destroy or enslave at least double that number of our fellow creatures, considering the multitudes we are obliged to murder by sham wars, in order that we may procure them, and consequently draw down by our infamous example the same evil on as many more besides? Will reason or conscience for a moment submit to it, when the only pretext which can be given is, that we suppose their understandings are inferior to ours? If so, why not pity and protect them till better instructed? But *cowards* alone take the advantage of *fools*, supposing the poor Africans to be such. What then shall we call ourselves, *Christians* or *devils*? and can a race of *devils* act worse against us than we do against them? And, as they have exactly the same right, if they had equal power, to plunder us as we have plundered them, how should we bear it, if a fleet of their ships should hover round our shores like a set of vultures after their prey? Would not every principle of self-interested indignation be roused in us? If then it be admitted that their understandings be weaker than ours, yet I am sure of this, that in art and wickedness, as it relates both to our principle and practice towards them, we abundantly exceed them.

Far. Well, I wish with all my heart, our 'squire was in the *thickest* of them, he would give it them *roundly*.

Mrs. Lit. Patty, my child, ring the bell.

Miss Polly. No, mother, Patty and Nancy are going out themselves to bring it in.

[Miss Patty and Miss Nancy went out immediately, and, by way of keeping up an old hospitable custom, speedily returned, Miss Nancy with a heaped plate-full of cake, cut in slices, and Miss Patty with a large waiter, with glasses of wine already poured out.]

Mrs. Lit. (To *Mr. and Mrs. Worthy.*) Madam, I hope you and the 'squire will be so kind as to drink a glass of wine, and eat a bit of cake, after your tea.

Mrs. Wor. No, I thank you, Mrs. Littleworth, we seldom take any thing after tea till supper time.

Far. I hope your *honour* and *madam* will be free, and taste a little of the cake that my wife and daughters have been making, and drink a glass of wine. It is *oulandish* wine, the same as your honour drinks at the hall. My son went for it to Mr. Vintner's of the George.

Wor. Well, Mr. Littleworth, for once I shall have no objection to taste your wine; and as my wife and daughter have been so much affected at the stories Mr. Henry has been telling us, I hope they will follow my example.

[As the fashion of drinking health was not yet banished from Grace-hill farm, Mr. Worthy drank the family of the Littleworths, then sipped his glass again, and drank his Majesty's good health. On which the farmer observed, in his younger days how his father directed him to drink the Pretender's good health, but that now he could drink his Majesty's good health, with all his heart. The same glass served to drink success to farming, and the last sip served for another toast.—A speedy abolition of the Slave Trade. Mr. Worthy was the toast-master, in which Mr. Lovegood heartily joined him, and thus ended the ceremony of the cake and wine.]

Loveg. Well, but Mr. Henry, as it is agreed that

all your stories will be too much for us at the present, and as we must hear about poor Sancho and his brethren, may I request the favour that the next time this company meet it may be at the vicarage, some Wednesday before the lecture; (*to Mr. Worthy*) but I am afraid, sir, we shall not have that pleasure, for above a fortnight or three weeks, as I hear you are going to take Mrs. Worthy to see her relations in Lancashire.

Wor. Directly as we return, I am sure, we shall be all very happy to come and see you, when we shall hope, not only for some profitable conversation about poor Sancho, but a good sermon in the bargain. But shall we not interrupt you, sir, in your meditations on that evening?

Loveg. O no, sir; I hope I shall be prepared to talk to the poor people who attend our lecture before you come. Besides, such sort of conversation as we shall then have, I am sure will be no impediment to the sermon; and, by such a kind visit, you will confer a favour on Mrs. Lovegood, who from her attention to her family concerns, is so much confined at home.

Wor. (*to Mr. Lovegood*) Having now settled these matters, we can allow you sufficient scope of time for the Bible, a little singing and prayer.

Far. Ay, and what a mercy it is when God sends ministers that know how to pray. I well remember, when I was first awakened to a sense of my evil state, *as how* when our rector, Mr. Dolittle, came, as he thought, to set me right again, when I asked him if he would take the Bible and expound a chapter and go to prayer, poor gentleman, how he jumped about *like a parched pea in a frying pan*. What a pity it is when the *neglectful* and blind are sent by blind men to lead the blind.

[Miss Nancy directly took the hint—ran out immediately and brought in her father's large Bible out

of the kitchen, placed it before Mr. Lovegood, and snuffed the candles.]

Far. Why, Nancy, my dear, you should not have brought in *that* Bible. (*To Mr. Lovegood*) Why, sir, I should be quite ashamed if you were to see what marks and notes I have made in it while I sat reading in the kitchen by the fire-side.

Loveg. Never mind that, my friend. I always love to see a marked Bible; it is, in my opinion, a good evidence that our Bibles do us good, if we can mark and note them while we read them: you know that we pray that we may “read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest” the blessed word of life.

Far. Amen, I pray God we may. But, with your leave, sir, I had rather you would read out of another. (*To his wife*) Dame, will you send for that nice fine Bible, with the pictures in it, which your aunt left you as a legacy. It never can be made a better use of than on the present occasion.

[The fine best Bible was accordingly fetched down out of the curious old chest, or cabinet, in which it was imprisoned, while Mr. Lovegood said, that he wished it might be as much marked and noted as was the other; observing, at the same time, that it was from the kitchen Bible the people got the most good. Mr. Lovegood, however, having been much affected, begged leave first to walk out for a few minutes into the garden, on which occasion, being a man of a very fruitful and a retentive mind, he composed a hymn, which afterwards was sung at the family service. And now Mr. Lovegood, “like a workman that needeth not be ashamed,” opened the precious word of life. The chapter he chose was the 12th of the Romans. He dropped some very pertinent observations while he read the chapter, but his attention seemed peculiarly arrested by the following words: “Let love be without dissimulation; abhor that which

is evil; cleave to that which is good; be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another." Then he quoted from St. John, "God is love;" and dropped some very wise and rich remarks, how God, our God in Christ, being love, needed no other happiness than what he possessed in his own infinitely lovely existence; and that we were proportionably happy in the enjoyment of our existence also, as we existed in him. He observed that the highest indulgence to a gracious mind was to confer that happiness on others, in loving them and doing them good, as through the pardoning love of Christ such infinite good had been done to us by our regeneration and conversion to him. That self-love was the natural principle on which all mankind acted in their fallen state; that the grace of the Holy Spirit was communicated to crucify and mortify this *hellish* principle in man, and to implant in him another principle perfectly supernatural, a most solemn and sacred love to God for his own sake, and a most merciful and tender love to man for God's sake. He strongly remarked how contrary a spirit of tyranny and oppression was to the spirit of Christianity; that sin turned *men* into *monsters*, rendered them "implacable, unmerciful, and without natural affection;" that the grace of the gospel, on the contrary, turns *monsters* into *men*, not only directing them to be loving, gentle, and merciful among themselves, "in distributing to the necessities of the saints, and in being given to hospitality;" but constraining them to go beyond all this, even "to bless our very persecutors while we could recompense to no man evil for evil; but, if possible, as much as in us lay, to live peaceably with all men;" therefore the Christian, instead of avenging himself, chose rather "to give place unto wrath." If therefore even "his very enemy hungered, he would feed him, if he thirsted,

he would give him drink;" thus, instead of being overcome of evil, he was directed, like his Lord and Master, "to overcome evil with good." Thus he went on with the chapter, impressing the same tempers and graces on the family as were then before them in the Bible. He then observed how the reverse of all this was exemplified in the horrid business of the slave trade; that the whole of its establishment was founded on the "mammon of unrighteousness," on a selfish love of the world; and that the result of this infernal traffic could not be otherwise than what it really was, a regular system of wholesale licensed thievery and murder; that instead of supposing the principles of Christianity could for a moment allow such a hellish commerce in human blood, directly as we are made by the *power* of the gospel what we should be by the *letter* of the law, we are blessed with the spirit of universal love. We are meek, merciful, loving, "pure in heart," "blameless and harmless, the sons of God." The furious lion is softened into the lamb, and all that is venomous and evil, as in the serpent kind, is powerfully extracted from our natures by "the blood of the everlasting covenant," whereby we "draw near to God," and are constrained to live to his glory.

Next he dropped some delicate hints on the blessedness of this religion, as it brought down such happiness into families, by making them experience a little heaven in themselves and their houses. The Farmer, Henry, and Miss Nancy felt the application, for they could "set to their seal that God was true," in the glorious influences of the power of converting grace upon their own hearts.

After the chapter had been thus read and expounded, the following hymn, just before composed by Mr. Lovegood, was given out, and Thomas Newman *pitched* the tune:

Now let the efforts of our praise
Arise to him who reigns above;
In whose essential holiness
Dwells the eternal flame of love.

Jesus, our God, thy love we sing,
Unknown to sinners of our race,
Till thy compassion brought thee down
To save us by thy wondrous grace.

Then what is heav'n but as we find
In thee is all we wish to be;
And what is hell in man, dear Lord,
But as he is devoid of thee?

Then where is heav'n but in the soul,
Who dwells in thee supremely bless'd,
And where is hell but on the shore
Where mercy finds no peaceful rest?

Soon may this love and mercy reach
The swarthy tribes of Afric's shore;
Those slaves of sin thou canst set free,
And bid them go and sin no more.

We blush with holy shame that men
Who bear thy sacred name, our God,
Should dare one single man enslave,
Or shed one drop of human blood.

Kindle the flame of love divine
In some kind heralds of thy grace;
And bid each distant clime receive
The gladsome news of heavenly peace!

After the hymn, Mr. Lovegood offered up a very appropriate prayer, first for themselves and the family, blessing God for the grace already given, and praying for farther vouchsafements where still needed for the rest of the company then present; for the people of his ministerial charge; for the farther spread of the gospel; for the king and government; and for those objects of human wo who had been made the

subject of their conversation.—Soon after this the company withdrew; and if the reader be not tired in reading, he must exercise his patience in waiting the return of Mrs. Worthy from Lancashire, before the subject of the slave trade be reassumed in another dialogue, and then concluded. In the interval, however, the reader will find in the next two dialogues a more minute account of the family of the Littleworths than was at first designed

DIALOGUE XI.

THE HISTORY OF THE FAMILY OF THE LITTLEWORTHS,
WITH THE CHARACTER OF RECTOR FILLPOT, AND
MR. MEEK, HIS WELSH CURATE.

THERE lived in the town of Ruckford, about fifteen miles from Mapleton, a Mr. Nathaniel Steadyman, who had united himself to Farmer Littleworth's family by marrying his younger sister. His occupation was that of a Currier, in which line he did a considerable deal of business, and was in general esteem among his neighbours for his candour and integrity.

The family of the Littleworths, however, were unfortunately educated. In point of religion they were tutored in all the high church notions of the day; so that the least deviation from the established church, was, in their esteem, more to be dreaded than a thousand deviations from the common rules of morality; insomuch, that even cursing and swearing was a much smaller offence than attending a *conventicle*, and scarcely any offence at all, provided people exercised their profane talents against the Dissenters. Report also says, that old Mr. Simon Littleworth, with all his family, used to drink the Pretender's health after dinner, and that it was well he did not lose his life in the rebellion in the year 1745, for entertaining and encouraging the rebel army when in the North, against the present family upon the throne, by whom our civil and religious

liberties were established. Mr. Simon Littleworth, the father of the present Farmer Littleworth, loved getting money to his heart, but could not bear to spend it, even on a decent education for his children. He died about the year 1776, leaving a fortune among his children of about three hundred and fifty pounds each, entailing also upon them all the prejudices of an unhappy day and generation, conceiving higher notions of the religion of Dr. Sacheverell* than of that of Jesus Christ and his Apostles.

According therefore to all probable circumstances, Farmer Littleworth would never have submitted to have heard the gospel, if he had not first heard it in a church. But the Farmer, though still a churchman, was now happily delivered from the trammels of his former education, and began to entertain equal love to Christians of all denominations; yet not so the rest of the family, which now consisted only of himself, and two sisters; his elder brother and a sister having been dead some years ago.

His elder sister, Polly, was the exact counterpart of Miss Polly, to whom she stood godmother. She was, in her younger days, so self-willed and perverse, that no person could ever venture to ask her the question, if she chose to alter her state; which also, by general report, will probably be the fate of the god-daughter, as well as the aunt.

The Farmer's sister continued to live in the neighbourhood of Mapleton till she was near sixty; but on account of the pressure of the times, has lately removed farther north, to make a joint purse with

* Dr. Sacheverell was the high church champion in the days of Queen Anne. He was impeached by the commons for his seditious high church principles; his sermon was ordered to be burnt, while he himself was suspended from his ministry for three years.

another old maiden lady, known by the name of Madam Vixen. And though she was Miss Polly all the time she continued near her brother, yet since her remove she has submitted, though with some regret, to the graver appellation of Mrs. Mary.

Thus convenience has brought those two old ladies together; though they are the frequent cause of vexation to each other, yet hereby they are just able to keep a maid servant between them, who is generally changed about six times in the year.

Madam Vixen is often accustomed to boast that she had a superior education, and therefore attempts to correct Mrs. Mary for her vulgarity of expression; and also that her family was of much *better blood* than the family of the Littleworths. This is a frequent cause of mortification to Mrs. Mary, who plies her in return for her family pride and self-conceit. Thus alternately they irritate and vex each other, till they make themselves so peevish and fretful thereby, that they scarcely exchange a word for several days together. During these intervals of ill-humour, there are frequent threats of separation, till these little *fracas* are settled by the neighbouring gossips bringing them some new tales of the affairs of the neighbourhood, which they delight to hear, retail, and exaggerate. Then an *innocent* game at cards again sets them a quarrelling, and makes them *guilty* of the same sort of conduct against each other. Thus they *rub on*, together, from time to time: yet, if their dispositions are dissimilar in some instances, in others they are perfectly alike.

In point of religion they are precisely agreed; for, though they seldom trouble the church but when the weather is very fine, yet they *do their duty* in reading the Psalms and Lessons at home: while two or three times a year they submit to the penance

of a gloomy week of preparation before they receive the holy sacrament; which is seldom done unless on the great festivals. But in nothing are they more similar than in their belief of various signs, and omens, and prognostications; on which they are ever exercising their minds, and tormenting each other, under the expectation of the most gloomy events. The prognostications of Moore's almanack are always received and read by them with prodigious avidity and glee; and though they are aware that the first Francis Moore, the original physician and *astrologer*, must long ago have been dead; yet they have no doubt but that the present Francis Moore is as much a real character, and a far wiser *astrologer* than his father; he being also the seventh son of his father, who was himself a seventh son. How far it was done with a design to impose on the credulity of the old ladies might be difficult to say; yet they seem fully persuaded that the present Francis Moore has also a seventh son, who, though but young, is now studying both physic and *astrology* in the town of *Utopia*, in the north of Ireland; and they have no doubt but that he is born to possess so supreme a degree of knowledge, by investigating the configurations of the stars, that he will be able to read the history of all future events beforehand, both private and public, as plainly as he can now read his A, B, C; and that he will as far outshine those *great luminaries*, Count Swedenburgh, Mr. Brothers, and some other prophesiers on our late public events, as the vast knowledge of a Newton outshines the intellectual powers of a goose.*

* Nothing can equal the sad disaster that must have attended the prognostications of this famous astrologer in the esteem of his admirers, in his political predictions on the

Mrs. Mary, it seems, some years ago, in one of her superstitious fits, and wishing for some foresight as it respected herself, sent a guinea to the astrologer that he might cast her nativity; and the prognostication was, that she was to be married to a surgeon. Through this unfortunate circumstance, she set her cap at every surgeon and apothecary for miles round the neighbourhood. She once went so far as to feign herself sick, that she might have an excuse to send for one of the gentlemen of the faculty: and though she gave him to understand how matters had been predicted respecting her future life; yet, alas! such was the Doctor's incredulity, that notwithstanding the prognostication, he could not believe that he was to be the man.

No one can wonder that these ladies, who are so fond of hearing and telling "Old wives' fables," and of attending to such absurdities, should also give way to all sort of fears and apprehensions arising from other causes the most superstitious and absurd. Hence it is that they are kept in perpetual alarm; at one time by the death-watch, at another time by the croaking of a raven, or the screeching of an owl; then again by the winding-sheet in the candle, and a variety of such other absurdities; as though the all-wise God had given a commission to spiders,* owls, and ravens, and even to tallow candles, to instruct mankind in the knowledge of different future events.

last two years. On the year 1802, the predictions were all for bloodshed and war; and when war returned, for 1803, all his prophecies ran in favour of peace. In some former editions, these prophecies were presented to the reader more at large; but a page filled with such silly prognostications would as soon get out of date as the almanacks themselves.

* Some naturalists are of opinion that the death-watch is not the spider, but another much smaller insect, found in the wood of old houses.

This unfortunate turn of mind, however, had once proved nearly fatal, not only to the comfort, but the very life of Madam Vixen. She heard, three or four times, her chamber-bell ring, as it was supposed, of its own accord. This brought to her recollection the story of her grandmother's death, which was foretold by some such event three weeks before the time. She therefore positively concluded that within that period she was to depart. This so worked upon her imagination as to bring on a serious illness. The apothecary was sent for only out of form, as she concluded it could be of no avail; the lawyer attended to alter and finish her will; and the poor clergyman, though as ill-liked as the rest of his brethren, was sent for to prepare her for her change, and to fit her for the final reception of the holy sacrament; which it was her design to have received a day or two before her departure, which seemed for awhile more fully confirmed by another event *dreadfully* similar to the former. Madam Vixen and her nurse one night evidently heard a bell ring, as though it had been from under the ground; but the fears excited on this account were soon dispersed, as it was only a piece of Mrs. Mary's prudent attention, who muffled the hammer of the bell belonging to the clock, as its shrill-sounding noise was found offensive to Mrs. Vixen: and a little while after this

Then tell all your grannies it is a wood worm,
That lies in old wood like a hare in her form;
With teeth or with claws it will bite or will scratch,
And chamber-maids christen this worm a death-watch;
Because like a watch, it always cries click,
Then wo be to those in the house who are sick;
For sure as a gun they will give up the ghost,
If the maggot cries click, when it scratches the post;
As soon as they hear it, it shortens their breath,
And they speedily die—because frighten'd to death.

the whole of this supposed melancholy event disclosed itself: for one night, while the nurse was sitting up, hearkening after death-watches, screech-owls, &c., and feeding upon these strange fears, the kitten stole into the room, (for both the old ladies are very fond of cats) and after the manner of that frisky generation, Puss fixed her eyes upon her old plaything, the tassel of the bell, and consequently gave it a handsome ring. Mrs. Vixen takes the alarm, and asks if the bell did not again ring of itself? The nurse bursts out with laughing, and adds, —“Why, madam, it is nothing but the cat playing with the bell-tassel, and I dare say this was the reason why it rang before.” However, the ringing of the bell brought Mrs. Mary into the room, who, when she heard of the event, joined with the nurse in a laugh on the occasion; while Mrs. Vixen immediately took heart, and consequently began directly to recover. The nurse told the apothecary on his next day’s visit, that the cat had done more for her mistress’s recovery, by ringing the bell, than he could do with all the drugs in his shop. She then told him the whole of the story, which before was known only to the family. A message also was soon afterwards sent to the minister, that he might be informed a repetition of his visits would not be needed; and the lady herself soon recovered, on the removal of the causes of her disease.

The reader may suppose that he would not have been presented with a detail of these little events, had it not been with a design to expose the folly of those superstitious fears which are so very injurious to the minds of all who have not sufficient sense and resolution to resist them. Where there is but little real religion, the want of it is too frequently supplied by an abundance of superstition. The hu-

man mind is prone to run into extremes on every occasion: some are for believing too much, others for believing too little. Happy are they who, being blessed with "that wisdom which is from above," are preserved in the middle path, and saved from every extreme.

But to return from this digression. Mrs. Steadyman was in some respects of a better mind than her sister: she was of a more conversable and friendly disposition, which she could exercise pretty freely among her neighbours, though but very sparingly to her husband; who originally being but a poor, though very industrious apprentice, found it a *convenient match*. Thus, by marrying a *fortune*, he had the *misfortune* to be married to one who conceived she had a right to "dictate and usurp authority over the husband,"* or, according to the delicate style of the day, *to wear the small clothes*. This, in point of civility, was to be submitted to, at least during the honey-moon; but, to the sad discomfiture of Mr. Steadyman, she had contrived to wear them from that time to this.

Notwithstanding some little offence had been given to Mr. Steadyman's family by the farmer having shown a dislike, (they being on a visit soon after he became serious,) to the introduction of cards and such sort of *innocent amusements*,† they felt themselves under the obligation, from their family connexion, to repeat their visit upon their nephew Henry's unexpected return, and it was about ten

* Such should have been the correct translation of Timothy, ch. vi., and if any good woman of the same temper with Mrs. Steadyman should doubt the justice of my criticism, I readily refer them to others who understand Greek better than myself.

† See Dialogue the IVth.

days after Mr. Worthy's visit to Gracehill Farm, that this interview took place.

On the Saturday evening they arrived; as Mr. Steadyman could on the Sunday be best spared from his business. The author is not acquainted with the conversation, as it passed at supper; but what afterwards took place, when the table was cleared, he has collected to the best of his power.

[*Thomas Newman is introduced.*]

Thomas. Sir, you was saying you might like to take the covered cart to Brookfield Church to-morrow, as the weather is inclining to be wet; if so, I should be glad to get things ready before I go home.

Farmer. I cannot tell as yet, Thomas. (*To Mrs. Steadyman.*) Sister, would you like to go with us to Brookfield church? It is hardly two miles from our house, and Mr. Lovegood is a charming man.

Mrs. Steadyman. O no, brother, I did not come here to change my religion; wherever I go, I always think it best to keep to the parish church. I shall go with sister Littleworth to Mapleton, to hear Mr. Dolittle.

Mr. Steadyman. Well, brother Littleworth, I'll go with you, for I cannot see that your notions of religion have done you any harm; and I must confess my nephew Henry is wonderfully reformed; but you need not have the cart for me, I had rather walk.

Miss Polly. If my aunt Steadyman won't go, I am sure Patty and I sha'n't. I have no notion to go and be crowded, and pushed about at that church, when we can sit so comfortably at our own.

Miss Nancy. I don't see, father, that you need to have the cart, if my aunt won't go; you and brother Harry may ride as usual, and I can walk with

my uncle, and show him the nearest way over the fields.

Hen. Well, I wish, with all my heart, my aunt would but for once come with uncle: who knows what a blessing might attend it!

Mrs. Steady. There,—that was the way of talk last time we were here, as though nobody had any religion, unless they were all of one way of thinking.

Far. Well, then, Thomas, we won't have the cart unless it should rain. Harry and I shall ride as usual, and Nancy and brother will walk. But have you had your supper?

Tho. Yes, sir; my mistress has been in the pantry, and cut me off a great heaped plate-full of victuals to take home with me. It will make a rare feast for Betty and the children, with a few boiled potatoes. (*To Mrs. Littleworth.*) Thank you, madam, a thousand times. (*Thomas retires.*)

Mrs. Littleworth. (*To Mr. Steadyman.*) I am not so much against my husband's religion as I was, for it has made that poor man an excellent servant; and Henry and Nancy are good children; and though I don't like to leave my parish church, yet I believe Mr. Lovegood is a very good man.

Mr. Steadyman. Well, and about six miles from our town there is a Mr. Meek, who serves two churches, who is of the same *way of thinking*; and oftentimes have I heard him run down; but for what I cannot tell, unless it be because he is a better man than most of his neighbours.

Mrs. Steadyman. Why, don't you know that his rector threatened to turn him off his curacies the other day, because so many people come out of other parishes to hear him, and that he went to the bishop about him?

Mr. Steadyman. Well, and much good he got by

that. How could any one think that the bishop should turn a poor man off his curacies for having a full church. I am sure, if the bishop was to turn off all the parsons that have empty churches, he would have enough to do.

Far. Ay; but, brother, you have only got hold of half the story: for it has been said when Rector Fillpot, who is some great cathedral man, (and every one knows he loves his bottle better than his Bible,) went to the bishop to make it out as though his curate did wrong to have such a full church, he directly said he was heartily glad of it, and wished that every other parson's church was as full. And when Rector Fillpot asked my Lord Bishop what must be done if all the people left their churches to go after these sort of preachers? he said *as how* they must out-live and out-preach such men as Mr. Meek, and that was the way to bring them back again. Rector Fillpot must have found it a desperate hard thing to *quilt* all that; but, to my way of thinking, this was all a *shim sham job*; for the rector knows he never could have got another such a curate in his own way, to serve two churches, at the distance of between three and four miles from each other, and throughout all the summer months to serve each of these churches twice a day, for forty pounds a year. Now you know, brother, I am a farmer, and Mr. Meek must have a horse; for he cannot ride through the air like a *witch on a broomstick*, and that would cost him, to buy it and keep it, near upon twenty pounds out of the forty.

Mr. Steadym. Poor gentleman! I have often wondered how he could contrive to live upon so little; and he generally looks more decent in his clothing than one would expect; but he is much beloved, and I am told that many of his neighbours help him out.

Far. Ay, and so they need; and I am told also that our 'Squire gave him a new suit of clothes, from *top to toe*, last Christmas; and that he looked as well dressed of a Sunday as the rector himself, though he never could look so *plump*. According to his way of living, I wonder how he does, with his small income, *to keep body and soul together*; but it is a *burning shame* that other people should keep Rector Fillpot's curate for him, or let him be half starved, poor gentleman!

Mrs. Steadym. I dare say the rector would give him more if he was of his *own way of thinking*; but he is displeased with him on account of his religion.

Far. Ah, sister, this is a *sorry* excuse. You make but a poor hand of it, in *lifting the lame dog over the stile*; but, to my mind, that man has found out the best way of *thinking*, who has found out the best way of *living*. Well, well, when we were all honoured to drink tea at our 'Squire's the other day, my son Harry gave a terrible account of the slave trade; but sure I am, the slave trade in England is not ended, when such a man as Rector Fillpot can have so many places of preferment as to bring him in twelve hundred pounds a year, while his poor curate, that he had quite out of Wales, (for that he might come cheap,) should be worked so hard, and have not much more to feed himself than what he wants to feed his horse, which he must have to take him from church to church. And poor Mr. Meek now begins to be an old man. I am afraid these fat rectors don't love their curates half so well as I do my old horses.

Steadym. Indeed, brother, it is a sad thing to see those who are our teachers acting in such a manner. We always mind more what *a man does*, than what *a man says*; and as to Rector Fillpot, we never hear of his coming into our parts but about Easter, and

then every body trembles lest he should come to screw up his tithes still higher than he has done already; and all that he does for it, perhaps, is to preach one sermon in each of his churches, and then they are sure to see no more of him till that time twelve months. But it seems they talk about making all these rectors reside on their own livings; yet I can't see what good can come of that; for till they send us better men, the more we know of this sort of ministers, the less we shall like them.

Far. Yes; and when he comes into these parts, he always visits our rector, and gives us a sermon. In the days of my ignorance, how I used to admire him! The last time he preached, it seems, he made a *main bustle* about the church, and fell aboard some parsons, (I'll warrant he was throwing some *scalers* at Mr. Lovegood,) who wanted to make themselves popular by being neglectful about their tithes; and that it was the duty of the clergy to see after the 'moliments of the church, (I think he called them,) and that it was the duty of the people to pay the parsons what they called their dues. Well, well; if such a sort of religion will take a man to heaven, I am sure Rector Fillpot will sit far above St. Paul; for every body knows, if he be neglectful of his *flock*, he is eager enough after the *fleece*; and they say, of late he is got so fat that he can scarcely squeeze himself into the pulpit, because of his big belly, and his poor curate so thin, that he could almost creep into a mouse hole.

Mrs. Littlew. Ay, Mr. Littleworth, I remember what you say is very true. I was there to hear him, and I thought he had better been upon something else.

Far. Why, if such men as Rector Fillpot are to go to heaven, it is impossible to suppose that Demas, who loved this present evil world, should ever have

been sent to hell. Why they think we *countrified* plain folk are so ignorant, as that we don't know a good man from a bad one. But, dame, can you remember what was the text?

Mrs. Littlew. I remember it was a very short one; "The labourer is worthy of his hire."

Far. Why, then, according to that doctrine, the curate who did all the labour, should have all that the rector gets, and the rector all the curate gets; and I'll warrant this would soon bring down his fat belly for him.

Hen. Well, well, I must confess nothing hardened me in my wickedness like the conduct of such ministers. When I was going on in the most vile ways, and with the most wicked company, we could laugh at all religion, because it was preached by such sort of ministers as we knew had no more of it than ourselves.

Steadym. Indeed, Henry, I am as much ashamed of such men as you can be. If I had known Mr. Meek had been so good a man, I should have been glad now and then to help him out.

Mrs. Steadym. I sha'n't like that, Nathaniel, without your letting me know it. I am afraid you'll soon be of brother's religion, and I sha'n't like that neither. I have no notion of chopping and changing about one's religion in this manner. You know that Mr. Dulman, our minister, when he thought you seemed that way inclined, and when he heard you was coming to see brother, came on purpose to advise you against all these new notions; for if we are all wrong now, what is become of our fathers and grandfathers, who went on in the same way as ourselves? But I don't see what business we have to find fault with the clergy.

Far. Well, well, sister, I shall never think of trusting the concerns of my precious soul to that

man who takes no care of his own; but no man living, for twenty miles round, can love and honour those of the clergy whose lives properly *square* with their doctrines more than I do; but while we hear both in the Old Testament and the New, how the Lord declared his wrath against all the false prophets, and scribes, and pharisees, though we should pity and pray for them, yet I am sure we do wrong to be their followers. You know if the blind lead the blind, we shall all fall into the ditch together. But, brother, would you not like to have another glass of ale? [*To his wife.*] Dame, pour out sister another glass of currant wine before we put away the things, and then fetch the Bible, and let us go to prayer; it is best not to sit too long by the *drink*.

Mrs. Steadym. But, brother, mayn't we go up stairs and pray *to ourselves*, if we like that best?

Mr. Steadym. It is not so late but that we can stop a little while longer. [*Mrs. Steadym* submits.] The *marked Bible* is placed before the Farmer, who read the first part of our Lord's sermon upon the mount, Matthew v., and then said what good minds feel, and are naturally inclined to say, of the blessed state of those real Christians our Lord describes as thus blessed in him. And as it was the custom of the family, that when Henry read, the Farmer prayed, and when the Farmer read, Henry prayed, so Henry offered up a very suitable and affecting prayer. This so immediately attracted *Mrs. Steadym*'s notice, that she was not a little surprised how well he could remember to *say his prayers* without book, and begged to know where the book was to be bought, out of which he had learnt his prayers. The Farmer made answer, that the prayers were written upon his son's heart by the pen of Doctor Experience. The family wished to retire, which prevented all farther inquiries about Doctor Experience, though the com-

mon guest of every humble praying sinner's heart. The writer also, at a late hour in the evening, begins to find his own mind flag, and therefore wishes to conclude the present dialogue, that he may undertake another upon a more profitable and interesting subject, which took place on the Sunday evening after the family's return from Brookfield church.

DIALOGUE XII.

BETWEEN THE FAMILY OF THE LITTLE-
WORTHS AND MR. AND MRS. STEADYMAN.

A SUNDAY EVENING'S CONVERSATION UPON THE MERCIES
OF GOD IN THE JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION OF
THE UNGODLY.

THE Farmer, Henry, and Nancy, with Mr. Steadyman, not having sufficient time to return home between the services, carried their provision with them into Thomas Newman's house, and there partook of it. After the second service, they returned, and supper being ended, the following conversation took place:

Steadyman. Well, sister Littleworth, I never spent such a Sunday as this before. [*To his wife.*] Mistress, I wish you had been with us. I never saw such a serious and devout congregation, and never heard such a sermon since I was born. And then we ate our dinners at Thomas Newman's house, the poor man that works for my brother. What a good man he is! and what a charming family he has got! I counted seven of them, and I think his wife is near her time again;* and what a wonderful prayer he

* It is now upwards of three years since the farmer became serious. This accounts for the addition of another child since that period, (see Dialogue I.,) and explains at the same time an odd report how the Farmer was overheard "talking to the devil behind the hedge." The fact was, the Farmer hearing that Thomas's wife had produced another child, went to their

made before we all went again to church. We do not serve God in our parts any thing like as they do here. I never saw any thing like religion as I have seen it this day.

Mrs. Steadym. Why, Nathaniel, what can possess you to talk about religion in this manner? Well, if I did not always suspect what would become of this visit, as well as Mr. Dulman.

Mrs. Littlew. I let my husband go his way, and I go mine; and I find I am quite as happy since he has *taken* to religion as ever we were before.

Steadym. Well, never did I hear any minister from the beginning to the end lay open the Bible in a manner like him. I am sure I should never stay at home if I could hear at Ruckford a minister like Mr. Lovegood. If I can, I think I shall go to hear poor Mr. Meek, the Welshman, for he is supposed to be the most like him of any man in our parts. But O how he explained, as he called it, the way of salvation for ruined sinners by Jesus Christ! Though I have read so much of it in the Bible, and have heard so much about it, yet I wonder at myself, how I could be so ignorant what these things could mean.

Hen. Why, to be sure, he preached us two excellent sermons, but to me it appears as though every sermon he preached was better and better. O what a blessing we have in that most dear man of God!

house, and gave the family half a crown. On his return he was overheard grumbling and muttering against himself for his covetousness, declaring that the devil his old master should not have his ends. He therefore returned directly to Thomas's house, and said, "Thomas, this won't do, I must have my half crown again." Thomas, not a little surprised at this unexpected demand, restored the gift, and the farmer put a seven shilling piece in the room of it, and it was in this way the farmer conversed with the devil behind the hedge.

and what a mercy it would be, if in every parish there were such ministers to instruct the ignorant. It is his very heart's delight to go about doing good to the souls of his people.

Steadym. I must confess, when I heard him in the desk, I liked him wonderfully, but in the pulpit, what a man he is! and with what love and affection he preaches! his heart seems to feel every word he says. But I rather wondered at his text, "By the law is the knowledge of sin." How wisely he explained it! I did not know there was such a text in all the Bible.

Hen. And did you not admire how he set forth the purity and holiness of God, both in his nature and in his law? That as he was infinitely holy in himself, so he must hate sin, whether committed by apostate men or angels, in an infinite degree; that we had not only to consider our outward actions before man, but the state of our hearts inwardly before God; that it was said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they," and they only, "shall see God."

Steadym. Why, I had always understood that if we were but just and honest before man, it was quite enough. How well he explained that text, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no flesh living be justified!" that though we might be justified by our actions in the sight of man, yet that none of us could be justified in the sight of God, as his holy nature abhorred the inward sinfulness of our hearts.

Far. Ah, dear brother, how glad I am to hear you talk after this fashion! Because I did not deserve to stand before the justice for my wicked deeds, I thought I had righteousness enough to stand before the Lord himself. How could I suppose myself a Christian, while I thought no more about the salvation of my soul by Jesus Christ,

than the dead folk do in our church-yard at Mapleton?

Hen. But while he pointed out the nature of God, did you not mind, uncle, how he explained to us that every wicked sinner in a state of enmity against God, lived with a hell in his own heart, while he was “living without God in the world?”

Steadym. Yes. And I remember he said, that every sinner was his own tormentor by his wickedness.

Hen. I suppose you mean that part of his sermon in which he was proving how every person who was tormented with anger, malice, or revenge, was a most cruel self-tormentor; and that covetousness shut up a man’s heart not only against all mankind, but against himself, and that therefore he was a self-tormentor. These, he said, were a set of *devilish* self-tormentors. Then he talked of a set of *beastly* self-tormentors; and all that he said against these evil ways I have experienced to be true, most sadly to my own cost. In those days I should not have cared if I had broken my father’s and my mother’s hearts, if I could but have got their property to have spent it in my wicked projects. [*Henry is affected and weeps; the Farmer is also much affected, and adds,*]

Far. See, brother, how wonderfully the grace of God has changed the heart of my dear child! how different he is now to what he was before he went to sea! And you know what a poor, thoughtless, worldly-minded sinner I was before I took to go and hear Mr. Lovegood.

Steadym. Why, I confess, brother, I see something in religion that I never thought of before, and all that I have been hearing to-day seems to me to be so true, that there is no disputing against it.

Hen. Yes, uncle, and I was glad for your sake that you were there; for it appeared to me as clear

as the light, what Mr. Lovegood said of the law, that it was the revelation of the mind and will of an infinitely holy God among all his creatures; that therefore the least sin, in the least degree, must put us under the condemnation of that law; that if God could in any measure allow sin, or look over it upon account of our corruption, such sinful actions would be no longer unlawful actions, (and what a contradiction that would be) for "where there is no law there is no transgression."

Steadym. Indeed, Mr. Henry, it appears to me that I might have gone all the days of my life to hear Mr. Dulman at Ruckford, and still continued as ignorant of the law as if I had been a downright heathen. Nay, as for my part, I do not know that I ever heard any thing farther about the law than what a heathen may practise quite as well as a Christian. At one time we are told we must not get drunk; then that we must not curse and swear; then that we should pay our debts; and then that we must come to church and keep the Sabbath. Now I had never any inclination to do otherwise between man and man; but we never hear any thing to the purpose how the heart of man should be before a pure and holy God.

Far. Ay, and just in the same way Mr. Dolittle used to "daub me over with his untempered mortar;" for though I was never so strict and moral, as you have been, brother Steadyman, yet as I kept pretty *tight* to my church, and used to act *good-naturedly* towards my neighbours, and as our parson used to say of me when he used to hear of me in my *tipsy fits*, I had a *good heart at bottom*, I thought if I had religion enough to please him, I need not concern myself about any thing farther; especially as I thought he could do such wonderful things for me when I came to die, by the assistance of the holy sacrament and his absolution.

Henry. Ah! but uncle, such sort of notions will never make out what Mr. Lovegood said about the law from the word of God, how it is "the letter that killeth, and the ministration of death and of condemnation." If the law required nothing but outward sobriety and morality, I suppose you never transgressed it; and then the Bible is not true, that says "we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God," and that consequently "judgment is passed upon all men to condemnation."

Steadym. Why, I have no more a desire to make myself a beast by getting drunk, than I have a desire to go and lie to-night in brother's hog-stye: and as for outward integrity between man and man, I thought myself almost to be a little god upon that account; because people would say of me, that they would rather trust me upon my word, than believe many others upon their oath. But I did not quite understand what Mr. Lovegood meant by the law being "the ministration of death and of condemnation."

Henry. Why, you know, when any one commits a capital offence by transgressing the laws of his country, then the law administers condemnation and death to that man; and when he is given over to the executioner he loses his life by the letter of that law, and therefore it is "the letter that killeth." Now, you know, uncle, the first and great command is, that we "should love the Lord our God with all our hearts, and minds, and souls, and strength;" but our blinded consciences think little or nothing of living in the perpetual neglect of love to God; while we are much more alarmed, if we neglect those rules of morality we ought always to observe between man and man. Thus we live in entire neglect to the duties of the first table, that tell us what we should be before God, and think that all will be well if we keep up a little outward decency in attending to the duties

of the second table, which direct us how to act among our neighbours.

Steadym. But how Mr. Lovegood talked about the spirituality of the law, and what a holy frame of mind was needed before ever we could love God, and that we could practise nothing that was truly good before God unless we loved him. That it was impossible that any man could repent of sin till he hated it, and that sin never was hated till God was loved: and how plainly he made it out, that without this love to God we could never pray aright, believe aright, or do any thing aright.

Far. Ah, brother Steadyman, and so I found it with me directly as I took to go to Brookfield church; for though I had much more reason than ever you had to find fault with the *outward* wickedness of my actions, yet I now felt the worst of the evil lay in the *inward* wickedness of my heart; that as I knew nothing what it was to love God, so I had no heart nor inclination to do any thing that was good in his sight. Never till then could I say with Job, though so much more holy than any of us, "Behold, I am vile!" O what strange foolish creatures we must have been, in the midst of our wickedness to think that we were righteous, when God's word so plainly says, "There are none righteous, no not one."

Miss Nancy. Well, as for my part, I never thought whether my heart was either good or bad, or any thing about it, only I thought it was wrong to oppose people because they were desirous to be better than myself; but I never saw what a state I was in till I heard Mr. Lovegood preach upon that text out of the Lord's prayer, "Thy will be done," and then I saw, as he explained it, I never did the will of the Lord in all my life-time, and that I never could do it so as to please God, till I had a new heart.

Steadym. A new heart! ay, I heard Mr. Lovegood make use of that expression.

Hen. Yes, and can't you remember what he said, how that God never wrote his holy law but upon the tables of a new heart; and that every sinner without a new heart was in a condemned and ruined state; and that all we did in such a state was sin, because done from a sinful principle?*

Steadym. Well, till this day I always thought I had as good a *chance* for heaven as any of my neighbours, but I never considered the state of my heart before God.

Far. Ah, brother, there is the *gripe*. When we think of our actions before man only, though now and then we get ourselves daubed and dirtied, yet we suppose by a little of the white-wash of morality we can soon cover all this. But when we look at the state of our hearts, how can we think of justifying ourselves before him?

Steadym. Well, I shall never think I shall be able to justify myself before God any more. What the publican said I must say, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

Hen. How heartily glad I am, uncle, that you now understand it. "By the law," or by the knowledge of the law, "is the knowledge of sin;" for this is the only way we can come by the knowledge of the glorious doctrine of salvation by Christ alone. And how wonderfully well our minister preached upon that subject in the afternoon.

Mrs. Littlew. Why, Patty, child, how you sit yawning! What, are you going to sleep?

Miss Patty. Why, is not going to church once or twice a Sunday religion enough for any body, without having so much of it over and over again after supper?

* See Article the XIIIth,—Of Works before Justification.

Mrs. Littlew. Well, well, if you and Polly don't love to hear any more talk about these matters, you had better put away the things into the pantry, for we have all done supper. (*To the Farmer.*) Mr. Littleworth, shall you want any more drink?

Far. Oh no, Mrs. Littleworth, you may put it all away: but let us see (*The Farmer takes out his watch,*) it is not above five minutes after nine by the town-hall clock at Mapleton; and if our poor daughters don't like our conversation, yet I think it will do brother Steadymen, and none of us any harm, if we sit up a little longer to talk about the good things we have been hearing this day at Brookfield church.

Steadym. I admire that your minister takes such different texts to preach from, to what Mr. Dulman, and such sort of ministers choose to *head* their sermons with; and then when they have taken their text, we hear very little more of the Bible, but only about some moral duty we ought to perform, and against some evil practice that people ought to avoid. I never heard that text preached upon before, which Mr. Lovegood took this afternoon, "that God might be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus," and at first I could not conceive what he could make of it.

Far. Why it is the sum and substance of all the Bible.

Steadym. So I thought when he came to open it; what a deal of pains he takes to make the people understand the Bible.

Far. Whenever he has shown us our *ruination* in ourselves, he is sure to tell us of our redemption in Christ.

Steadym. Well, I never thought of any Christ till to-day, but my own good works.

Mrs. Steadym. Why, Nathaniel, and what can you

have better than good works? There is nothing like them, I am sure; don't tell me: good works are better than all the faith in the world. I am afraid I shall be plagued to death by your new notions in religion, and I shall not like that; and if you take to go after *parson* Meek, you sha'n't be taking him a pocketful of money every time you go there. Don't you know that we have got a family?

Mrs. Littlew. Why, sister, I used to be very cross with my husband when I suspected that he gave away his money to Mr. Lovegood's followers; but, I don't know how it is, we have prospered more of late than ever.

Far. Ah, sister, we have all enough of this world; it would be well for us if we thought a little more of the next: but I remember the time when I used to keep up a *main bustle* about my good works, but it was when I did nothing but bad ones. Now I never thought of leading a new life till after God had given me a new heart, and we know that good faith will produce good fruits; but it will never do to turn religion *topsy turvey*.

Hen. Let me see; I think I put down something that Mr. Lovegood said this day on that subject, (*looking at his notes*) here it is, he brought these three texts, "Without faith it is impossible to please God."—"Faith worketh by love."—"Love is the fulfilling of the law." So that unless we are rooted and grounded in the faith of the gospel, we shall never bring forth any fruit unto God.

Steadym. Well, well, I now see I have been trusting upon the decency of a heathen, without the spirituality of a Christian. O, brother, what shall I do to be saved?

Far. Why did you not hear at church how "God could be just, while he was the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus?" Was it not worth while to go

a thousand miles to hear such a charming sermon, and so much of the precious love of Christ to such perishing sinners?

Steadym. I was so much affected while he explained to us the love of Christ in dying for our redemption, that I scarce knew where I was, it so overcame me.

Far. Dear brother, how thankful I am that ever you came with us this day to Brookfield church. How this brings to my mind when Thomas first persuaded me to go there, and Mr. Lovegood was then preaching upon these words, "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon;" and a trimming sermon it was against me, and all my wicked ways, and desperately alarmed I was; but when he preached afterwards upon that text, "Christ died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God;" how was my heart melted down under that sermon; I was all admiration how Christ could find it in his heart to save such a wicked wretch; and when poor Thomas saw me so affected, for till then I never dropped a tear about the state of my soul in all my life, he quite cried and sobbed (*Farmer drops a tear;*) but, brother, they were all tears of joy, because he thought the Lord was then saving my soul, and breaking my hard heart; and when Mr. Lovegood happened to look that way, and see what a state we were all in, he was as much affected as either of us. How he wept, and preached about the precious promises of the gospel! He was so overcome, that he could hardly go on; and as to myself, I had several times almost swooned away.

Steadym. Mr. Lovegood seemed very much affected this afternoon.

Far. I dare say he saw you affected; and it is amazing how glad at heart he is when he can but see such poor creatures as we all are melted down under

a sense of the love of Christ our Saviour to such vile sinners.

Hen. O, father, can't you remember the first night I came home, at family prayer, how we were all affected while he mentioned that text, what "joy there was in heaven over one sinner that repenteth!" What a time of love was that to all our souls!

Nancy. Why Mr. Lovegood seemed to look very much our way, especially when he was explaining how the justice of God was glorified in the death of Christ, that the mercy of God might be also glorified in the salvation of sinners.

Steadym. What strange conceptions I have had about these things! I used to suppose that nothing was required by Mr. Lovegood's followers; but that if they had faith in Christ, no matter what they were, or how they lived: but now I begin to see if Christ does not pardon me by the shedding of his blood, I never can be pardoned; and that my heart must be changed, or I shall be ruined for ever.

Hen. And when we come to compare not only our actions, but our hearts with God's law, "Who shall stand when he appeareth?" But this does not remove our obligations to obey the law; and it is from a sense of our obligations to obey it, because it is in itself holy, just, and good, that we are made to be ashamed that we have so transgressed it.

Far. O no, brother; we can never "live in sin that grace may abound;" for "how shall we who are dead unto sin live any longer therein?"

Steadym. Why that used to puzzle me when I saw you and Harry and others, that were followers of Mr. Lovegood, so different in your way of living to what you were before. I always thought it very strange that such bad doctrines should teach people to live better lives. Mr. Dulman came on purpose to tell us a day or two before we came here, that

all the people about these parts were for free grace, that they might live as they list.

Hen. Much he understands what is meant by grace, when he talks in that manner; for the Bible tells us, "sin shall not have dominion over us, for we are not under the law, but under grace;" and that "the grace of God, which bringeth salvation, teacheth us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world;" for that we now "reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ."

Steadym. But I remember he contradicted himself the same evening, by saying, he had no notion of people being so over strict in their religion. I never went much by Mr. Dulman's religion; for his father meant to bring him up to the law, but he soon found he had not sense enough for that, and therefore said he was only fit for a parson; but I am sure I heard no such notions about grace at your church, and from what happened, not a long while since, he seems to me to have no idea at all of the meaning of the Bible; for an old lady who was supposed to have some very odd notions in religion, because she now and then used to attend a little meeting in our town, left him a guinea to preach a funeral sermon, and she said what was to be the text; let me see—there were some such words in it as these: "Not having on my own righteousness, which is by the law." I recollect that much of it; but I remember that some people in our town supposed there was no such text in all the Bible. Brother Littleworth, where is that text? but I hope I shall mind my Bible more than I have done.

Far. Harry, my child, is it not in the Philip-pians?

Hen. (*Taking out his pocket Bible.*) Yes, father,

it is in the 3d chapter of the Philippians, and the whole text runs thus: "I count all things as dung that I may win Christ and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

Steadym. Well, now, all that Mr. Lovegood has been saying, seems to me wonderfully to have explained that text; but poor Mr. Dulman could not make it out at any rate: it is said that he went over on purpose to Mr. Blindman, to know if he could borrow from him, or any other clergyman, a sermon on that text, and he supposed it was utterly impossible that a proper funeral sermon could be made on such a text.

Far. So I should suppose, according to his way of thinking, when every poor sinner is to be *tossed up* into heaven by the merit of his own righteousness. But, brother, what was the *upshot*?

Steadym. Why, when he came to preach the sermon, he plainly told the people that he could not understand why the old lady should choose such a text that had puzzled all the divines round about the country; and that as in St. Paul's Epistles there were many things "hard to be understood," he would not himself be so presumptuous as to explain it; but that he would give us the best sermon he had on a funeral occasion.

Far. Ah! but if Mr. Lovegood had been to handle that subject, I'll warrant he would have given us a *rare* sermon upon it. But you know it is said, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Hen. Well, uncle, I hope that text will never puzzle you any more, as it has Mr. Dulman. But

as to the accusation, that such ministers have to make against Mr. Lovegood, as though what he preached gave people a license to live in sin, I am sure in himself there is not a better man living; and he is never so happy as when all his hearers live after the same good example as we at all times have from him: but he did not leave us in the dark about this matter in his sermons this day. You know how highly he spoke of the purity, and excellency, and goodness of the law in the morning, and that as we were eternally bound to obey it, so it was most just and righteous in God to punish us for our transgressions; but then he did not tell us, that we were pardoned by the death of Christ, that we might *live in* sin, but that we might be *saved from* sin. And cannot you remember how he insisted on it in the afternoon, that every one redeemed from sin by the blood of Christ would have his heart renewed by the grace of the Holy Spirit? and you know, uncle, it is utterly impossible, when our hearts are thus made holy, that our lives should be unholy.

Steadym. Well, I confess I see things in a very different light from what I ever saw them before. How glad I should be if my business would let me stop over Wednesday, that I might hear Mr. Lovegood preach another sermon.

Nancy. Why, father, suppose you and uncle were to go down and talk to Mr. Lovegood to-morrow morning; I am sure he would be very glad to see you.

Far. Ay, that I am sure he would. I never shall forget in what a loving and kind way he first talked to me after I was convinced of my sinful state. Shall we go, brother?

Steadym. I am quite a stranger to him. I should be ashamed to take such a liberty; besides, how I should expose my ignorance!

Far. Nay, but, brother, does any man keep from fire when he is cold, or from victuals when he is hungry? My son Harry can look after the workmen to-morrow, and you and I will ride down to Brookfield. I know from blessed experience how well our minister has been taught, like his blessed Master, "to show compassion to the ignorant, and them that are out of the way."

Steadym. Well, brother, I'll think of it, and to-morrow morning at breakfast I'll let you know.

Mrs. Steadym. I say to-morrow morning too! I think we shall none of us be in bed till to-morrow morning, for at this rate we shall not have done talking about religion to-night.

Mrs. Littlew. Why, sister, though I cannot take in my husband's religion, yet I never got any good by thwarting him in this fashion. I must say it before both our husbands, they have been very good husbands to us, as husbands in general now go.

Far. Well, well, dame, as sister is tired, and the girls have put away the things, let us have family prayer and go to bed.

On this occasion it was Henry's turn to read. He read the two chapters out of which the texts were taken, and afterwards the Farmer went to prayer, but in the middle of his prayer, while he was offering up some humble supplications on behalf of his brother and sister, he was so overwhelmed by a holy anxiety for their salvation, and his speech was so interrupted by his tears, prayer was abruptly concluded; this, however, gave an opportunity for another act of devotion for the conclusion of the family service.

Mr. Lovegood having a poetic turn, was in the habit of composing a few verses of a hymn suitable to his subject, which the congregation sang after the

sermon, and which Henry Littleworth was accustomed to take down as Mr. Lovegood gave it out. It was therefore proposed that the hymn sung at church at the afternoon service should be repeated at evening family prayer, of which the following is a copy.

DEAR JESUS, we thy name adore,
Our holy Saviour and our King;
We own thy sov'reign love and pow'r,
And of thy great salvation sing.;

And shall we then in sin proceed?
Ungrateful and rebellious prove!
Make all thy wounds afresh to bleed;
And thus requite thy dying love?

Forbid it, Lord! May ev'ry soul
The hated thought at once disdain;
The pow'r of sin thou canst control;
No rival lust with thee shall reign.

Objects that once gave high delight,
Through grace, are now detested grown!
In vain forbidden joys invite,
Since now the vicious taste is gone.

Dead to ourselves, and dead to sin,
In Christ our better hopes revive;
Th' immortal pulse now beats within,
While, quicken'd by our God, we live.

Beams of celestial light descend
To renovate the carnal mind;
With wings full stretch'd to God we bend,
And leave this worthless world behind.

In free submission low we fall
Before our dear Redeemer's throne,
To him with joy devote our all,
And live and die to him alone.

On the morrow morning Mr. Steadyman was persuaded to make the visit to Mr. Lovegood. The con-

versation was, we doubt not, edifying and good; but the reader is requested to wait till after the writer's next summer's excursion, when he hopes to call on Mr. Lovegood, that he may be able more correctly to state the substance of this interview.

The writer, however, has already obtained sufficient information of the knowledge of matters at Brookfield, so as to form a conjecture that it is not probable Mr. Steadyman can long attend the ministry of Mr. Dulman: and that, though Mr. Meek is a man of a good and sound mind, yet not of great preaching ability; and also that he will find his church at too great a distance for his regular attendance, though not for his occasional visits: and that therefore, when he became inquisitive after the truth of the gospel, he discovered there was in the same town a worthy dissenting minister, whom, in the days of his ignorance, he had overlooked; whose life was exemplary, and who had preached more of the doctrines of the church of England in his meeting in one sermon, than was to be heard in the parish church for seven years together; and there is no doubt, but when Mr. Lovegood hears this, though in himself from principle and conscience a minister of the established church, he will advise Mr. Steadyman to seek after the word of life wherever he can find it.

Mr. Lovegood is a man of enlarged and generous mind; knowing, therefore, that the mere reading of the church prayers, however excellent in themselves, is not the general mean of salvation, it is his opinion that a preached gospel should be principally sought for in every Christian church or congregation.

The writer of these Dialogues also having, at an early stage of his ministry, in a measure been driven from out of that line of the sanctuary service in which Mr. Lovegood is called to labour, confesses that he still retains his partiality for that service; but as he

sees that a gracious God does not all his work in one line, and as he laments how much the members of different societies are cramped by their restrictive laws, he equally abhors that spirit of *schism** and separation set up by party against party, against the true church of Christ at large, which is so beautifully defined in one of our own church articles, as being "a congregation of faithful men in which the word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly administered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same."

* That this is the true import of the term "Schism" in the word of God, see an Essay on the subject in the Evangelical Magazine, for January, 1804.

DIALOGUE XIII.

BETWEEN MR. AND MRS. LOVEGOOD, MR.
MRS. AND MISS WORTHY, THE FARMER,
HENRY, AND MISS NANCY.

On the Evils of the Slave Trade, concluded.

AFTER the return of Mr. Worthy and family from Lancashire, the engagement with Mr. Lovegood was attended to. Though the pride of Miss Polly and Miss Patty was considerably gratified by their visit at Mr. Worthy's, yet as Mr. and Mrs. Lovegood were constrained to live in a more humble style, they were glad of some frivolous family excuse to stay at home. Mr. and Mrs. and Miss Worthy, the Farmer, Henry, and Nancy, were the whole of the party.

For the sake of brevity the tea-table conversation is omitted; one circumstance alone shall be recorded. Mr. Lovegood's vicarage was by no means lucrative, and though he had a wife whose fortune did not annually produce above thirty pounds, and there were four children to be maintained from this small pittance, still it was far from his disposition to extort from his parishioners the utmost penny he could demand by law, knowing well the infinite injury that is done to the cause of religion by such a mercenary conduct, in so many of the clerical order; yet he still received much more than an equivalent from the hands of those who knew his worth. Many had experienced that the best of consequences had been the happy result of his ministry among them.

A temperature of conduct, had, by the grace of God, directed them to be frugal in their personal indulgences, that they might be liberal to the necessities of others. Such naturally became the real friends of Mr. Lovegood; and thus, while his heart was at all times too tender to receive even his accustomed dues from the hard hand of honest industry, while he has been frequently known rather to give than receive, yet others, knowing that "the labourer is worthy of his hire," brought forward their free will offerings in kind abundance. In the list of such contributors, the name of Farmer Littleworth was registered of course. On his arrival, therefore, from Gracehill Farm, the Farmer pulled out a pound of tea from his great coat pocket, while Miss Nancy took into the pantry a pan of butter salted down for the winter's service of the family; which presents were the more thankfully received, as it was by the particular wish of Mrs. Littleworth, she having now sufficient evidence that these little tokens of benevolence were no burden to the family, compared to the extravagance which was among them, when they were all living "without God in the world."

[Dolly, Mr. Lovegood's maid, the only servant they could afford to keep, having cleared the tea-table, the conversation was thus resumed:]

Farmer. How glad we all were to hear the bells ring so charmingly, and to see the chimneys smoke so rarely at the hall, on your honour's return last Saturday!

Worthy. Why, Mr. Littleworth, we stopped somewhat shorter than we designed; for, last Sunday, when we were at Welford church, we found ourselves quite out of our element; the minister seemed to be taking a deal of pains to make out how the

secret influences of the Holy Spirit, which he seemed not altogether to deny, were still *imperceptible*.

Far. 'Las, sir, what things these *larned* clergy will say! I remember once when I had a *main bout* with Mr. Dolittle on that head. But how can we know or have any perceptions about things that are imperceptible. (*To Mr. Lovegood.*) A'in't I right, sir, in my poor notions on that head?

Loveg. Why, it appears to me, the best evidence you can have that you are right in that point, will arise from your own experience; and, in this respect, blessed be God for the change which has been wrought upon your mind, and that is the best evidence to you that religion is not *imperceptible*. But let us charitably suppose, that the ministers who make such remarks, are unhappily mistaken respecting our interpretation of these glorious truths. They conceive that we are ever preaching up the necessity of feeling a set of wild visionary impulses upon the mind, whereby at one time we are precisely to know the moment we were convinced of sin, and then as precisely tell the moment, by another impression, when we were pardoned. Now, while I am sorry for the just offence which has been given by too many who have submitted to such wild impulses of the imagination; yet to urge the charge of enthusiasm promiscuously against those who can, according to the 17th article, seriously say, "They feel in themselves the workings of the Spirit of Christ," or, in other words, the spirit of purity and holiness, which must be *felt* in all who have it, is utterly unjust.

Wor. But after all that has been said to the contrary from the press, and the pulpit, can this be a sufficient apology for those who suppose the offence committed by a few wild-headed visionaries is to be justly urged against all? yea, and to make this a pre-

tence to deny, or virtually to deny, all those divine influences in which consist the very essence and soul of Christianity. In the name of wonder and common sense, what good can be had from imperceptible influences? Is not the mind as much capable of perceptions or feelings as the body, if not more so? And must we not all feel the motives by which we act? And is a man an enthusiast, because by the grace of God he *feels* himself wise and good, whereas he once *felt* himself wicked and foolish?

Loveg. I thought the ministers of Welford preached somewhat more consistently with the truth, and the doctrines of the church.

Wor. At one time you would say, he aims well, and that he would hit the mark; then again he seems to fly off, and appears as wide as ever; but he is a man of a decent and a respectable behaviour, and sets a much better example than many others of the clergy in that neighbourhood. I gave him Venn's Complete Duty of Man, and Witherspoon on Regeneration, and he accepted them very kindly.

Far. The Lord make the books a blessing to his soul! but when I went to Mapleton church, I remember Mr. Dolittle used to give us some sermons about *all-hallows tide* of the same sort; but then to my mind it seems, that whenever they happen to hit upon the truth, it is done all by chance, "*as the blind man shot the crow.*"

Wor. But, Mr. Henry, we came together that you might give us some farther account about the matters in Antigua, and tell us something of the history of poor Sancho.

Henry. Why, sir, the first thing I have to notice is that real Christianity is the same in all, and there is no difference in any as it respects the grace of God, whatever difference there may be in the colour of our skins.

Loveg. Do let us hear what poor Sancho told you respecting his being brought to the knowledge of the truth?

Hen. He was never so happy as when he was telling us the story of the converting grace of God upon his heart, and amidst all his afflictions that he had undergone, he would ever be crying “de best is all to come.”

Wor. But, Mr. Henry, had we not better first be informed of his history from the beginning, and afterwards hear of his conversion. Your father says it is an interesting story.

Far. Do my child, tell all about it, as you told it to Billy Traffick the other night at our house.

Hen. Sir, I’ll recollect it to the best of my power. In Africa the men have frequently more wives than one, and no wonder at it, the men not being so numerous as the women, on account of so many of them being cut off by this bloody traffic; and poor Sancho’s father, it seems, had two wives. For the sake of this horrid plunder their town was, as they call it, *broken up*, and Sancho’s family escaped through the back door of their hut.

Far. Why, my child, I should never have thought that they had a back door and a fore door, according to their poor way of living.

Hen. The back door, father, is only designed for their escape when we *Christian* Europeans, as we are called, invade their land, which they have as good a natural right to as you have to your farm; and that back door they always contrive as the device to escape the Hell-hounds that come after them from this country.

Loveg. Hell-hounds, Mr. Henry!—why, surely that was one of the words you were accustomed to make use of on board of ship before you were instructed to use milder language.

Hen. Oh, no, sir, either on board of ship or on dry land, it is the best expression I can think of for that sort of men. I can hardly conceive where such people can get their commission but from Hell itself; and, I believe, you will say the same, when I have told you poor Sancho's story.

Wor. Well, then, Mr. Henry, go on; but I fear it will be a disgraceful tale.

Hen. Sir, I told you how Sancho's family escaped through this back door when a Liverpool trader came to assist one of their petty kings to break up the town in which they lived. Guns and cutlasses rendered them successful in their engagement; and then Sancho well remembers, that women and children had nothing left them but to escape as well as they could from these tigers in human shape.

Wor. What a scandal to our land, that these licensed tigers should have it in their power to say they are allowed from a land of liberty to entail slavery, and wantonly to murder so many thousands of innocent sufferers, sacrificed at the altar of our luxury and pride! But I interrupt you, Mr. Henry, in continuing your story.

Hen. It was not a very probable circumstance, that the escape of poor Sancho's family could be attended with much success; his father having two wives, one of whom was near her time, the other with a sucking child at her breast, and four other little children with them, Sancho being the eldest of the family, and he not more than ten years of age. Poor Sancho says, he well remembers, that the first who was overtaken was his own mother, the woman who was big with child; but as she was at first seized only by a single man, they thought they might rescue her. Her husband therefore hastily took one of the youngest of his children from off his back, and having placed it upon the ground screaming with

misery and fright, he and Sancho ran back to rescue her. This they accomplished, and the family had another run for their lives and liberties; but having lost much time in the rescue, they were still pursued and overtaken by others. Sancho's father was soon joined by another man, who was trying to make his escape also. They resisted their pursuers as long as they could, that the women and children, if possible, might make their escape into the neighbouring woods. But the pursuers, supposing their lives were in danger, especially by the determined resolution of poor Sancho's father, who was a strong young fellow, and fearing lest others should come down upon them, fired at him, and killed him dead on the spot.

Wor. What a horrible scene of misery does all this exhibit before us! But what became of the poor women and children after they saw their only defender drop down *murdered* before their eyes?

Hen. O sir! Sancho says he well remembers the horrid screams of misery and despair he heard from the women the moment they saw his poor father fall: nor could it be supposed, that while they were thus overcome, and distracted with grief, they could long be out of the hands of the bloody pursuers. Thus they availed themselves of the two women and five children, though they conceived that they were obliged to murder the husband, whom they would have been glad to have spared, as it would have answered more for their interest to have sold him than to murder him.

Wor. Could any thing be more shocking! Oh that the British parliament would but remember, there was a day in which they once solemnly determined to see to the abolition of this dreadful trade! Trade did I call it; why, it is the greatest disgrace to the name of fair and honourable trade, to give it

such an appellation. But, Mr. Henry, I suppose you have a deal more to tell us about Sancho and the farther calamities of his family.

Hen. Oh, sir, poor Sancho can scarcely now tell the story, but he drops a tear, when he recollects how they were all dragged back by the bleeding corpse of his father, asking for liberty to fall upon him and embrace him for the last time, while weltering in his blood. But away back to the town that had just been broken up, were they dragged, there to see its inhabitants scattered, and every little comfort they had among themselves, laid waste, and then to bid it an eternal farewell. But it seems they went after the father and mother of the murdered man, to see if they answered their purpose.

Wor. What! and were they also added to the list of their bloody trophies?

Hen. As far as I could learn from Sancho, it was some time before they could find them, but when they discovered the man to be upwards of fifty, and his wife not much less, they *mercifully* left them behind, because they would not answer the end of their detestable traffic; and it seems, as they call it, they were pretty *full slaved* already, and mostly with young slaves, which answers their end best, as the old ones are more apt to die with the *sulks* or hang themselves, as soon as they can get an opportunity after they have been sold.

Wor. What! is it common for them to put an end to their present existence even after they are sold?

Hen. Sir, when I was off Jamaica, I myself saw three of them together one morning who had hanged themselves in the night; and I am told this is an event so very common, that a law is likely to pass prohibiting the importation, but under a certain age.

Wor. A fine story, truly, to be told, that we better

their situation in life, by transporting them from Africa, when it seems they would rather hang themselves than accept it! But what became of these poor creatures during the middle passage?*

Hen. Why, Sancho told me, that soon after they were all put on board a slave ship, his mother was taken in labour, and delivered of a dead child. The slave captain having been informed by the ship doctor, that it was next to impossible for her to survive the passage, and considering also that she would only take the room of another who might fetch a better price, they *humanely* set her adrift to shift for herself, in that wretched condition; and the first dance poor Sancho had upon deck was when he was made to skip and jump about at the lash of the whip, lest he should die of the *sulks*, because his poor heart was ready to break at the loss of his father, and afterwards at being for ever separated from his mother. However, Sancho says, not a little art was made use of to raise the spirits of the other woman, by promising them that they should all live comfortably together; but grief immediately depriving her of her milk, she had then nothing left but to water her child with her tears whilst she presented it with her dry breasts, and it soon after died in the mother's arms. Still the slave captain supposed he had a good booty in the family, as there were three boys and one girl, all of them between three and ten; and half-reared children, as I have

* The slave trader makes three voyages; the first from England to the coast of Africa, where he gets his horrid cargo; then to the West Indies, or other parts; this is called the middle passage; and then returns to England to refit. Yet to demonstration, it has been proved, that nothing is wanted but a merciful treatment of the negroes themselves, that they may increase and multiply according to the laws of nature. Thus we should still enjoy our luxuries from the tropical climate, and these wasteful voyages would be at an end.

before observed, are always supposed best to suit their purpose. It seems, however, that the rest of the *unmurdered* cargo belonging to this family were all landed; the poor weakly woman was scarcely alive when they were put up for sale. She went only for five pounds, while Sancho sold for seventy, and the other children for nearly the same; but dear Sancho little then knew that he was more highly valued by our blessed Lord, whose infinitely precious blood was shed for his redemption.

Loveg. How often have the most wicked devices of some been overruled for the salvation of others. I remember hearing, when I was curate at Abley in Yorkshire, how a man was determined to find out the wicked tricks of his wife, who occasionally attended a meeting for prayer at a village in that neighbourhood: and, as the Lord was pleased to overrule it, one of the company offered up a most tender and affectionate prayer for some then under persecution, that the lions of the world might not tear asunder the lambs of Christ's flock, but that by his grace every lion might be turned into a lamb: and there is every reason to believe it was the mean of his conversion to God. But, Mr. Henry, I must not interrupt you: finish your story.

Hen. Sancho well remembers, that when they were sold, he and the girl, being brother and sister, were sold together; but Sancho knew nothing after that for some years, of the other two children, and the woman who was their mother; and then he found that the woman lived not above a month, and perished in a neglected state, but had the happiness to hear that both his brothers constantly attended the Moravian ministry, and that there was no doubt but one of them was truly converted to God.

Wor. Then they were not allowed to live together, according to promise.

Hen. Promises from an African slave-trader are very rarely thought of after they are made. But in this respect, they had as much tenderness as is usually granted, to let the mother go with her own children, which, now I am told, is more frequently done than formerly, as it answers best their own interest.

Loveg. Such sort of mercy reminds me of that passage, "The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel;" for what consolation could this be to the woman or her poor infants, while she was dying with neglect. But it should seem, upon the whole of this business, that three in one family were virtually murdered, that four poor innocent children might be doomed to perpetual slavery, when it was utterly impossible that they could deserve it.

Wor. I think you should also take into the account the poor infant who died through the hard treatment of the mother just before the time of her delivery.

Far. (*To Mr. Worthy.*) If your honour could find out that any poor parish 'prentice was treated half as bad, I am sure you would give them to know *the rights of it*; but it is wonderful to me that there is no bringing people to justice for such dreadful doings.

Hen. Why, father, some of them will tell you that there is no injustice in any of their doings, and that they only take them as lawful captives in war; and that, for aught they know to the contrary, their wars may be as just as ours; while, at the same time, they do all in their power to excite them to these abominable wars, but I never could find what justice had to do with war, excepting for self-defence.

Loveg. Why, the Scriptures have decided that already. "Whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even from your lusts

that war in your members?" It is an ambitious lust of power that has kindled the flames of war in thousands of instances, and it is impossible to calculate how many millions have been sacrificed at the altar of our pride thereby; but when we are all brought under the meek, and mild, and loving influences of the Gospel, "nations shall learn war no more."

[*Mr. Lovegood's eldest daughter, about five years old, comes in all in tears.*]

Mrs. Loveg. O, my dear, you should not come into the parlour without leave when there is company.—But what is the matter?

Child. Mamma, Prettyface will die,—John Cheese-man came to try to make her well again, but he says, he is sure she will die, and then what shall we do, we shall never go a milking any more.

Wor. Alas, alas! what can be the cause of these sad lamentations?

Mrs. Loveg. O, sir, our poor cow that you were so kind as to give us, the beginning of last winter, has met with a terrible calamity, by being goaded by some other cows on the common, and we made bold to send to your cow-keeper, to beg him to look at her after he had done work: for it used to be a high treat to our little ones to go and feed and milk the cow.

Wor. (*To the child.*) Never mind, my dear; there are more cows than one in the country. I dare say, we shall find another Prettyface, who will give her milk to your brothers, and little sister that is in the cradle.

Mr. Loveg. Oh, sir, I wish the child had not mentioned it. You quite overpower us with your favours.

Wor. Indeed, while you provide us so plentifully with "the sincere milk of the word," at so low a rate,

the least that we can do will be to provide you a little milk for your family.—[Should this part of the dialogue be continued, the modesty of the parties might be considerably offended. As, therefore, the author has the highest respect for Mr. Lovegood and Mr. Worthy; and as he would not, upon any account, forfeit the honour and favour of preaching in Mr. Lovegood's church, whenever he goes that way, he begs leave to drop this part of the subject, and proceed.]

Mrs. Wor. I hope, Mr. Henry, you have now told us of all the evils poor Sancho has been called to suffer; and, I am sure, you have related enough to chill one's blood. We shall be glad to hear next what were the merciful providences which brought him to the knowledge of the Gospel.

Hen. Alas! madam, there was a deal to be undone upon poor Sancho's mind before any thing could be done. He has oftentimes told me of his dread and hatred of the Christian's God, before he knew better; and, to be sure, his ideas on this subject were not less natural than curious.

Loveg. What were they, Mr. Henry?

Hen. One night, soon after he was landed in Antigua, and while he was seeking rest for his distracted mind, which he rarely could meet with, he verily thought it must be more than a dream, for that he actually saw the Christian's God, and that he was an uncommon tall white* monster, for that he was a god of a very powerful nation; and as his worshippers were always calling upon him, to *damn* and *blast* and *curse* almost every one they spoke to, he supposed him to be a most cruel and mischievous god indeed. No wonder, therefore, that Sancho's imagination

* Men of colour have a peculiar abhorrence of the idea of white.

farther represented this large monster to him, though of human shape, yet as having on his shoulders a most horrid tiger's head, with jaws capable of devouring fifty or a hundred of our fellow creatures at a meal; that round his head there were an innumerable quantity of all sorts of serpents and scorpions, and of all sizes; that his paunch or maw, was of such an uncommon size, as made him appear a monster indeed: that he had not only the head, but the paws, of a tiger, both on his arms and legs; and that it was most frightful to see how he could tear up the ground, and all that came in his way with his horrid talons; that he had a tail of such an amazing length, with a fiery sting at the end of it, that whenever he whisked it about, he did uncommon mischief thereby; that he had all around his immensely large body, a prodigious number of casks of rum and gunpowder, with swords, guns, cutlasses and all other instruments of war in terrible and vast abundance, that were made for him by the Christians who worship him; and that when he arose to shake himself the noise was most tremendous. That this horrid, monstrous, white god of the Christians, had a detestable partiality to the creatures of his own making; and that he frequently strided over the seas, that he might satiate his bloody appetite upon the poor Africans; that thousands of his little white imps were ordered to attend him in the different slave-trade ships; that as soon as they all landed, he had nothing to do but to stand upright and to look all around him, to see if he could find any peaceable, quiet towns, which were ignorant of his arrival, from this his *Christian* country; that then he would whisk his most tremendous tail over that country, as a signal to all his imps to plunder and murder as fast as they could, distributing among them his casks, arms, and ammunition for that purpose; and then as fast as these captives could be brought to him

by his bloody imps, he would swallow them down by scores; that one morning he came over from the Christian's country so hungry, that he devoured "four thousand five hundred at one meal;"* and that he is scarcely satisfied unless his imps procure him a hundred thousand year by year; and that when his maw begins to be so full that he can gorge no more, the rest of them he gives over to the care of his *buckrat* imps, who take them beyond the seas, that they may be kept for him, so that he may send for them, or come after them, whenever he thinks proper to devour them. Such was Sancho's idea of the God of *buckra* men; and the dream, or vision, was so strong upon his mind, that he could scarcely persuade himself it was not a reality.

Loveg. Indeed his idea of the Christian's god is not less natural than our crimes are enormous; but what opinion had he of their own gods?

Hen. He thought that some of their gods were bad enough, but nothing like so wicked as our god; but, blessed be the Lord, Sancho has been better taught since then. He now knows that "God is love."

Loveg. Yes, Mr. Henry, that is the part of the story we want to hear, how poor Sancho came by the knowledge of the gospel.

Hen. For some time after poor Sancho was sold, he had reason to groan under his bondage; and all that time he was kept in sad ignorance; but afterward he had masters who were much more humane; and they encouraged the preaching of the gospel on their plantations: but still Sancho kept up his prejudice against the Christian's God. The first thing which forcibly struck him was the meek and hum-

* See Dialogue IX., p. 7.

† The negro name for a white man.

ble deportment of two Christian slaves, a man and his wife, during a hurricane that was in those parts some years ago, and which was fatal to the lives of many. He wondered to hear them talk about their dear loving Saviour all the time their poor cots were blowing about their ears, and their lives in continual danger; nor could he make it out, while he was trembling and quaking under the apprehensions of death, notwithstanding he had met with so many things to sicken him of life, to hear them rejoicing and singing. One little hymn they sung over so often, that Sancho well remembered the words.

While thunders and tempests are rolling above,
I trust in my Saviour, and rest on his love:
The thunders of vengeance shall never annoy
The peaceable rest which in Christ I enjoy.

My blood-shedding Jesus I claim as my rock,
Who carefully screens the poor lambs of the flock;
I trust on his mercy, and live on his grace,
And under his cross is my sweet dwelling-place.

While Jesus sits smiling above the black cloud,
I'll sing to his praises Hosannas aloud;
For soon will he take me to regions above,
To bask in his presence and feast on his love.

Then here, my Redeemer, I'll sit at thy feet;
Should death overtake me, I humbly submit.
Then come the blessed moment in which I'm to die,
For Jesus hath loved me, I cannot say why.

Then the poor man would cry in their broken language, "O my dear wifey, you and I cast ourselves on de dear Saviour, for 'he careth for us.' O what a loving Saviour he is to care for such poor sinful human creatures as we are." Then when another tremendous clap of thunder was intermixing itself in the storm, he would cry,

And when thy loud thunders are rolling above,
We'll trust in thy mercy, and feast on thy love.

Then again he would say, "Our most dear Saviour is 'a hiding place from de storm and a covert from de tempest, and de shadow of a great rock in a weary land.' De storm cannot hurt us if it should kill us, for den we should go to de dear Saviour, who has been so loving and good to our sinful hearts." Such was the substance of the conversation and behaviour, so far as Sancho recollects it, of these poor creatures during the hurricane; and which was quite new to him, having never seen till now any thing like the holy patience which belongs to the real Christian.

Loveg. I should suppose, from this circumstance, Sancho began to have a more favourable opinion of the Christian's God.

Hen. Sancho, from that time, began to have an idea that the Christians had two gods; a very dreadful bad god, and a very merciful and good God.

Wor. Why really Sancho was not far short of the mark; the god of this world is quite as bad a god as Sancho could suppose him to be; but, I hope, he soon after this got acquainted with the good God; for, I am sure, he had suffered enough from the bad god.

Hen. For a time the poor creature said he "was afraid to serve de good God, because he appeared so much more weak dan de bad god." He observed, that "none of de great *buckra* men, nor any of deir rich masseys, served de good God, but laughed at all dat did; and dat dey did not like to serve de good God, because he would not allow dem to get rich by stealing and cruelty; nor to be angry and spiteful, nor to live in drunkenness and lewdness; and dat dere was one great Island about dose parts where all de people

served de great bad god, so dat dey quite devoured up dose dat served de good God.”*

Wor. Poor Sancho’s discovery, however, that there was a good God, as well as a bad one, might have been of considerable use to his mind, and, doubtless, led him to inquire farther after the truth.

Loveg. Why, really, he appeared to know more of the truth, even in that state, than many among us. I am positive that Sancho’s conceptions of the nature of God were more consistent than what is too generally admitted among ourselves. What loose notions are to be found among many who believe in the unity of the divine existence;† as if an allowance of sin could be found in the same holy Being, who from the infinite perfection of his nature, cannot but eternally abhor it.

Mrs. Loveg. But I hope, Mr. Henry, you will let us hear the rest of Sancho’s experience. The bells will ring for church in about half an hour, and my husband loves a little retirement before he begins the service.

Hen. I have already observed, that Sancho’s taskmasters began to be much less rigid and severe; and it therefore became more the custom to encourage marriage on the plantation on which Sancho laboured. Against this, however, he always had an objection, lest he should have an offspring to be made as miserable as himself; but as he found his own situation much altering for the better, he began to turn his

* It is probable Sancho has a reference to Jamaica, which is perhaps the nearest resemblance of the gates of hell of any place in the British dominions.

† The Socinians are very fond of claiming to themselves the title of Unitarians, as if they alone believed in the unity of the Divine Essence. Can this arise from ignorance? They know that we no more believe in the existence of three Gods, than themselves.

thoughts that way; but still he determined, if ever he did marry, to unite himself to one who served the good God, as he conceived he should be much happier with her than another. He accordingly paid his addresses to two or three young female slaves, while all of them were in one tone: "Me no love you, me no be your wifey, you no love our dear Saviour." All these refusals made Sancho more anxious to make farther inquiries about the dear Saviour, and this was the first thing that induced him to go into the chapels belonging to those good people called Moravians.

Loveg. It appears that this poor artless man had some secret drawings in his mind after good, but that as yet he did not know where it was to be found. I am sure, wherever there is a conviction of that which is wrong, and a holy desire to be right, such persons are not far from the kingdom of heaven.

Hen. So it appeared with Sancho. For, as soon as he began to hear the praying and singing and preaching of these good people, his eyes were at once fastened on them, and his heart was soon brought to receive the gospel. O! it was his delight to tell how his soul was won over to the blessed service of God by hearing of the glad tidings of salvation.

Mrs. Loveg. And I hope it will be as delightful to us to hear of it; do make haste, Mr. Henry, and tell us more of it before we go to church.

Hen. Oh! madam, it was very pleasant to hear with what sweet surprise he was led to attend on their ministry. He was first not a little astonished and softened by their singing, when it came into his mind how different it was from the mad bellowings, roarings, and screamings which are to be found among the wretched slaves of sin; and when compared to the execrable shouts of triumph made among

those cruel tormentors of the human race, who brought him from Africa.

Far. Ah! Henry, my child, you can now speak from experience. Neither you nor I knew any thing of happiness, till we were blessed with the grace of God upon our hearts, and now God has loved us, my dear child, how sweetly we love one another! (*Farmer much affected.*)

Hen. Yes, blessed be God, father, that we now know what it is to have that kingdom of God established in our hearts, which is "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

Loveg. None can tell the happiness they enjoy, who are blessed with "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, and which keeps the heart and mind through Jesus Christ."—But if Sancho was so affected under the singing, how did his mind feel under the sermon?

Hen. I was going to tell you, sir. The minister was, it seems, then preaching upon that text, "We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." O how Sancho delighted to tell of the effects of that sermon on his heart.

Wor. Can you give us the particulars, Mr. Henry?

Hen. Why, sir, he told me, that the minister introduced his sermon by remarking, what a deal of pains was taken in the plantations to destroy the *borers* that were so injurious to the sugar canes; and he supposed, that no merciful planter could ever wantonly wish to kill these poor insects, while each of them might probably feel as much as though "a giant died," provided he could but instruct them not to injure him any more. Then he asked the question, if there was a planter so wise as to contrive a plan to instruct them better, as what they did was the cause of their own destruction? Then he observed,

that before any planter was capable of instructing these poor borers, of his good will towards them, he must become a borer himself. Then he cried, "O the wisdom and mercy of God our Saviour towards our unmerciful and depraved race, for that we on earth were no more in the sight of God, than these little insects are in our sight. Yet that he might prove his mercy towards us, and that he might make known the riches of his love, he appeared as one of our own race, and suffered in our stead all that we deserved from the justice of his holy Father, for transgressing against his good and righteous law. This simple, yet beautiful display of the love of God towards man so affected poor Sancho, that he scarcely knew the ground he trod upon; and methinks I see him now, just as I then saw him while relating this part of his story, with his eyes lifted up, each of them filled with a floating tear of gratitude and joy, and then crying, in their language,

Let all de world fall down and know,
Dat none but God such love could show,

Loveg. What a mercy it is, that the Lord has inclined the hearts of these good people to labour with so much disinterestedness and holy zeal to bring these abject sinners to the knowledge of the gospel! But, I dare say, Sancho had somewhat farther to say of the particular effect the sermon had upon his heart.

Hen. He next told me, as he expressed himself, "that when all de broders and sisters dat stood near him saw dat our dear Saviour was breaking his heart," they all began to smile and weep for joy; and after the service was over they came round him like a swarm of bees; saying one after another, "O, my dear broder, how glad we are dat hearing of de death and sufferings of our dear Saviour has made

you feel de grace of a broken heart. Now, broder, he will make you happy, and he will come and live in your heart while you lie at his cross. O how welcome is de poor sinner to de loving Saviour." He afterwards told me, that he was soon persuaded to visit the good man he had heard preach; and when poor Sancho began telling him what a wicked heart he now found he had, he was a little surprised to hear him say all that was very good; and when he began to complain still deeper, he was yet more surprised when he said, that was better still; and when he farther told him that he was so very wicked, that he must be ruined for ever, if our blessed Saviour would not save him as the chief of sinners, he was quite astonished when the minister joined in saying, "O my dear broder, that is best of all; how glad I am that you have received the grace to know your great need of the blood-shedding and atonement of our blessed Lord." Soon after this, Sancho, beginning to find the conflict within himself common to all Christians, came and told the minister of a discovery he had made, that he had two souls, a good one, and a very bad one; the minister explained to him from whence his mistake arose, and that he had not two souls, but two very different principles in one and the same soul. Upon a farther discovery of the truths of the gospel, Sancho, however, quickly found himself a much happier man than ever he had been before; he walked in the love and fear of the Lord, and was soon baptized, and admitted to communion among these good people. And after that, was married to one of the women who would have nothing to do with him because he did not then love de dear Saviour.

Loveg. Why these good people have a dialect peculiar to themselves! but, notwithstanding some peculiarities of expression, they are most affectionately

and warmly attached to the essential truths of the gospel: and I am sure, wherever that is the case, mere modes of expression are of very little consequence; they have set an example to all the world in their zeal for the salvation of sinners, which never can be sufficiently admired.

Far. Henry, my child, I wish you could have brought Sancho and his family with you. How delighted I should have been to have had them all to work at our farm. I dare say we could have done very well by them, for Christians love to be diligent.

Hen. Ah! father, you don't understand matters. A slave in those parts is as much his master's property, as your hogs and stock of cattle are a part of your property.

Far. The more's the pity, my child, a thousand and a thousand times over.

[The bells striking up for church, Mr. Lovegood retires to his study; the Farmer, Henry and Mr. Worthy, take the opportunity to walk out to see if there could be any thing done for poor Prettyface; and thus ends the dialogue on the Slave Trade.]

DIALOGUE XIV.

A WHISPER FROM BEHIND THE DOOR; OR THE SECRETS
OF PRIVATE SCANDAL MADE PUBLIC: BEING,

A WINTER Evening's conversation over a Dish of Tea and a Game of Cards, at old Madam Toogood's, of Lower Brookfield, (mentioned in Dialogue III. who lived on an annuity of 150*l.* a Year;) between the good old Lady,

The Rev. Mr. SPITEFUL, Master of the Free Grammar School, in Envy Lane, Mapleton, who had whipped away all his Scholars but one or two, that he might live at his Leisure, and still enjoy the Profits of the Endowment, availing himself of other Advantages by his occasional Services among the neighbouring Clergy;

Mr. WISEHEAD, a Bookseller in the same Town, a strict Attendant on Dr. DRONISH, and his Assistant the Rev. Mr SMIRKING;

Mr. CONSIDERATE, one of the Aldermen of Mapleton, who possessed a few Houses in the Town, and a small freehold in the neighbourhood, and who had lately given more regular attendance on Mr. Lovegood, with his Wife and Daughter, who had been constant attendants some time before;

Miss PRATEAPACE, a young woman, who was an Apothecary's Daughter, one of Madam Toogood's God-daughters, and an apprentice of Madam Flirt, the Milliner; and

Miss POLLY LITTLEWORTH.

Miss PATTY was also expected, but both the young *Ladies* could not attend, as it was *Washing Week* at Gracehill Farm.

The conversation was thus introduced. Miss Polly comes in, all in a bustle.

Miss Polly. I am *perdigiously* sorry, ladies and gentlemen, if I have made you wait, but my mother wanted me to call at Mr. Traffick's, of the shop, as I was coming this way, for some grocery and other shop goods. I protest I have walked so fast that I am all in a state of *prosperation*—(*The tea is called for and introduced.*)

Spiteful. I wonder that every body should be running to that shop, to support such a schismatical enthusiast, as though there were no other shops but his. I would turn my servant away, if he should dare to go there for a *hap'worth* of sand.

Mr. Considerate. Now really, sir, you do no good by such vehemence. If a man acts conscientiously in his business, I don't see what we have to do with his religion; and, I believe, on all hands, it is acknowledged, that Mr. Traffick is very just in all his dealings.

Miss Polly. Sir, my father insists upon it, that we must all run *galloping* to that shop. I hardly think he would let our Sam wear a livery if he did not send there for all the trimmings: and when I was there, to be sure how he *held forth* behind the counter, as though he had been in a pulpit, about the miraculous conversion of my brother, as he called it. I am sure, of late, we are quite *suffocated** with religion in our house.

Mr. Spiteful. Yes, *conversion* is a mighty word with them; for it seems that not only such men as

* Miss Polly probably meant *surfeited*.

your brother, who was once so wild, and is now become so *sanctified*, but every one who steps a little aside from their strict notions of religion, they suppose to be no better than heathens, and they must all be converted or be damned. Mr. Wisehead, you are a man of reading, and I dare say you admit the justice of my remark against these enthusiasts.

Wisehead. In my opinion, sir, it is very injudicious to bring forward the words conversion and regeneration, as though they could be in any sense applicable among *us Christians* in the present day. They were only designed for primitive times, when people were brought over from being Jews or Pagans to be of our holy religion: but how can any of us be converted to the Christian religion, when we are Christians already.

Mr. Consid. What then, sir, do you think that Henry Littleworth was a Christian when he and his comrades kept our town in a perpetual uproar; and when one evening they got from your barber one of your old wigs, and put it on an ass's head, and then drove him down the town, and into your shop, saying Mr. Wisehead was come to sup with his brother?

Wiseh. Certainly, sir, these were very unwise and irrational steps in that giddy youth; notwithstanding it were the highest reflection upon the Supreme Being to suppose we have not within ourselves, from the principles of *natural religion*, sufficient powers to reform ourselves from our vicious courses; for what purpose has the Almighty given to every man both reason and conscience, if these were not adequate to the reformation of mankind?

Consid. Why really, sir, I can't see what great matters reason has ever done in the reformation of mankind; she seems to stand aside, and let nine-tenths act by mere passion and appetite; and as for

conscience, I am sure, among thousands, that acts like an unfaithful and intoxicated watchman, without either eyes or brains. I believe that my wife's minister is quite right in his doctrine, that all the faculties of the human mind are exceedingly vitiated and depraved; and till God mends reason and conscience, they will never mend us.

Wiseh. But, sir, if mankind are vicious, it is their own fault; for we *may* be all good if we *will*.

Consid. Certainly so. (*To Mrs. Toogood.*) See, madam, how your cat is a licking and cleaning herself all over.

Madam Toogood. Oh, sir, she is a lovely delicate creature!

Consid. (*To Mr. Wisehead.*)—Then I suppose she has a *will* to be clean, and she proves the point, she may be clean if she *will*. (*To Miss Polly.*) Now, Miss Polly Littleworth, did you ever see any of your father's hogs sit upright, and wash and clean themselves with their fore feet like that cat? and they certainly *may* if they *will*; but, alas, they want the will.

Spiteful. Well, such a thought, had I lived a thousand years, would never have entered my brains; but pray, are we to be compared to hogs and cats?

Consid. Why, in the Bible, men have been compared to brutes before now: to lions, bears, tigers, or leopards, wolves, foxes, and dogs, and to birds also, not less ravenous than such sort of beasts, to eagles, vultures, ravens, and others; yes, and to the worst of reptiles, to vipers themselves. But I only ask, if there ever was found that creature, either among men or brutes, that could *will* contrary to his inclination or disposition? What then can we mean by saying, we may all be good if we *will*? who in their senses ever denied it? Just so bad men *will* be bad, and good men *will* be good. Is not

every one's will regulated by his disposition? Such, however, is the glib nonsense of the day.

Wiseh. I hope, sir, you do not think, that we *rational* dissenters talk nonsense: but according to your notions (and I would not wish to misunderstand you, as I believe you have a *good heart*, and mean well) man is a mere machine—and there is an end to all distinction between virtue and vice in man, if we are *obliged* to act according to our dispositions, and have *no power* to correct them.

Madam Toogood. Oh! shocking, shocking, Mr. Considerate, I never thought you could believe in such bad notions of religion. I am very sorry to hear, that of late you have been such a strict follower of Lovegood. I am sure he preaches very wicked doctrines.

Spitef. Yes, madam, and such are the tenets held forth at Brookfield church. I suppose that Atheism will be preached there next.

Consid. Now I beg, sir, you would be a little more dispassionate and give me a calm answer to the following question: supposing you should ask any of the wild sparks in our town the reason why they gave way to such courses, what do you think would be their answer? Why, that they were *overpowered* by temptation and inclination before they submitted to such ways.

Spitef. I suppose they might, sir; but what of that?

Consid. Then it seems they wanted strength or power to resist, and that reason and conscience did them no good, and that they were conquered by the wicked inclinations and corruptions of their hearts.

Spitef. But if you make it out that these people acted against their wills in what they did, I can see no harm in any of their wicked tricks.

Consid. Stop, sir, you go on too fast: did I sup-

pose that they acted *against* their wills, when they acted *according* to their inclinations? Is not every man's will and inclination virtually the same? And are not all people, with bad inclinations, *wilfully* wicked, while others, with good inclinations are *willingly* pious? I think, Mr. Wisehead, the will is nothing but the servant of the understanding and inclinations.

Wiseh. (*Giving his forehead a grave and judicious scratch.*) Really, sir, your question is so intricate and important, I would rather take some time to consider that point. Before I venture upon an answer, I should like to talk to our ministers. The Doctor and Mr. Smirking, I'll assure you, sir, are very *rational* and able divines, and as you are in the habit of calling at our shop to read the news, in a day or two hence I hope I shall be able to give you a satisfactory answer: and then, sir, we can step into our back parlour, and have a few words farther on this subject.

Spitef. (*All in a hurry.*) Why, where is the difficulty of answering that question? What has the understanding or the inclination to do with the will? Have we not all a free will to act as we like best? Had not I a free will to come here, and must I not have a free will to go home again?

Consid. Pray, sir, have you a free will to throw yourself into the fire, or jump into the water, or to go to Brookfield church next Sunday?

Spitef. How can a man have a free will to do those things which he naturally hates?

Consid. Why then, having no inclination to throw yourself into the fire or water, or to go to Brookfield Church, there would be no getting you to do these things but by force. Now I always thought, with you, ever since I have considered this point, that every man's will must be free to follow his inclina-

tions and dispositions; and that is the reason why the world live so wickedly, because they like it best. And I think if you had attended a little more to the feelings of your own mind, and the minds of others, you would have found it out that all people act according to their inclinations and dispositions, whether good or bad, and that the understanding debates according to the object set before it; next comes the choice, and the will at last determines to pursue the object that is *suggested* by the inclinations, *digested* by the understanding, and *preferred* by the choice: [*to Miss Polly,*] and I dare say, Miss Polly, if your worthy father was one of the party, he would at once see that all this talk about free will was but *putting the cart before the horse*: for of this I am persuaded, we never act but as we are acted upon, and that good or evil are the result of all actions according to the habit of the mind.

Spitef. Then we are all like pumps, or wheel-barrows, and not rational creatures. I am for *rational religion* with Mr. Wisehead.

Consid. And so am I too, sir; but though rational creatures make machines, yet there is no rationality in the machine itself. Now I believe every man exercises his reason according to his nature and disposition; and when I suppose the pure and holy word of God is proposed to the choice of all, they who reject it do it with the utmost freedom of the will, because they dislike it, and that all good men have exactly the same freedom of will in the choice of good; "for if the Son shall make us free, then we are free indeed;" and when we are commanded "to work out our salvation with fear and trembling," that we may properly work at all, we are told, "it is God that worketh in us to will and to do of his good pleasure," and that we are made "his willing people in the day of his power." So that instead of being an enemy to ra-

tional religion, I cannot see how there can be any religion that is not *rational*.

Spitef. Where, sir, in the name of wonder, did you get all these cramp expressions from?

Consid. Why, sir, from a book I am ashamed I have paid so little attention to, till of late,—the Bible: and while you and Mr. Wisehead are attempting to explain away all those fine strong expressions of “conversion, regeneration, a new creation,” and the like, I have of late seen that a peculiar wisdom and glory belongs to them; and that it is no unmeaning abstruse metaphor, but a plain downright matter of fact, that “except a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”

Spitef. I always thought it would come to this, since you have lately taken to follow your wife and daughter to Brookfield church: it seems to me as if all the people were running mad together.

Consid. I acknowledge I had my secret prejudices, yet I could scarcely tell why, against my wife and daughter when they first took to go to Brookfield church; but I was satisfied, anger and opposition could answer no good end whatever. And when they requested that Mr. Lovegood might give us a visit at our house, soon after our great family trial, I confess I was not a little struck with his behaviour: and though I took an opportunity to dispute every inch of ground, I thought (from mere prejudice) I could maintain; yet such was the force of truth, and such was the tender, gentleman-like and affectionate way in which he treated me, while I rather had a design to expose him, by holding him at arm’s length before my wife and daughter, that I found myself entirely disarmed; and from that time I determined to go and hear him more constantly; for I discovered him to

* See Dialogue XXIX.

be a man of uncommonly good understanding, and of a truly Christian spirit.

Spitef. And thus, sir, you have told us how you have been seduced from your regular attendance at your parish church by one of these artful modern reformers. Hang them all! They will be the ruin of our nation.

Madam Toog. Ladies and gentlemen, is your tea sweet enough?

Consid. Quite so, I thank you, ma'am; but I think a few lumps more of sugar in Mr. Spiteful's tea would not be amiss, for there seems to be somewhat very bitter upon his palate that wants *sweetening*.

Madam Toog. Why, Mr. Spiteful, at times, has complained that sugar is apt to turn *sour* on his stomach.

Consid. To be *sour* as well as *bitter* at the same time must be a terrible calamity. Would it be amiss, Mr. Spiteful, if you were to come with us next Sunday to Brookfield church for some of Mr. Lovegood's *elixir*? he has an excellent recipe to cure *sour* stomachs and *bitter* palates. I have known many people that have been diseased in the same way, who were afterwards cured by attending at Brookfield church. Pray, sir, do any of the doctors in your way perform such cures?

Spitef. Upon my word, sir, I sha'n't put up with all this banter. I beg you would be less free with your skits and jokes. What is it to you what cures we perform?

Wish. Really, Mr. Spiteful, in my opinion, Mr. Considerate has quite as much reason to be displeased with you for your disrespectful speeches against his friend Mr. Lovegood, as you have to be displeased with him for a few innocent humorous turns. I believe, Mr. Lovegood, in his way, may be a very good man; notwithstanding his notions in religion are so

widely different from ours. We should be better able to carry our point, if you could deliver your sentiments with less heat and more deliberation.

Spitef. How can I help it? What, is no allowance to be made for a man's disposition?

Consid. I thought you said a little time ago, we may do what we will, notwithstanding our dispositions or inclinations. Pray, sir, which side of the question do you mean to take after all—that men *may will, if they will*, contrary to their dispositions and inclinations; or, that as we are disposed and inclined, so we *will and act*?

Spitef. Really, sir, I wish you would drop these abstruse metaphysical discussions. I came here for a little innocent chat, and not to enter into a debate upon such a curious subject as this.

Consid. With all my heart, sir; but then it is to be hoped we are not all to be called fools and madmen, because we suppose it necessary for a man to have the grace of God in his heart, so that our evil dispositions may be rooted out, and that we may feel ourselves inclined or made willing to obey. I don't think we pray like enthusiasts when we pray to the Lord after each command, in our church service, that he would "incline our hearts to keep his law."

Miss Polly. Well, I declare I don't think I should have come here this evening if I thought I was to hear nothing but this talk about religion. I was in hopes we were to have had a little harmless chat and a game of cards.

Spitef. I dare say Mr. Considerate has lately got so *sanctified* that he would not touch a card for all the world.

Consid. Why, truly, sir, I cannot find what good we get by such sort of amusements, that are only calculated to tempt us to *kill* time, when we are directed to *redeem* it; and how far we can or cannot

have "our conversation always for the use of edifying, that it may administer grace to the hearers," while we are so engaged, I suppose is easy to be determined.

Spitef. What, then, are we to be always *saying our prayers*, and are we to have no innocent recreations?

Consid. Yes, sir, you know I am fond of a garden, and I have this day been recreating myself by pruning and training a peach tree; and I felt it all the time entirely an innocent recreation: but I always found these games of hazard and chance were unhappily calculated to excite a spirit of emulation and gambling, which have a tendency to promote the worst of tempers; and though some may play with as much comparative innocency as I felt in pruning a fruit tree, yet there is a certain bewitchery belonging to this sort of games, which renders them at all times very dangerous in themselves, and very destructive in their consequences.

Madam Toog. Oh, Mr. Considerate, this is going too far. I really cannot see that we need be quite so strict, I love an innocent game at cards as well as any body; but then I always give my winnings to the poor; but I am very sorry I must not be one of the party to-night, as it happens to be the week before sacrament, and then I never touch a card. Thank the Almighty, I never neglect my duty.

Miss Prateap. Well, well, I dare say, ma'am, you don't think it necessary that we young folks should wear old heads on our shoulders. I am for being neither saint nor sinner. You know, ma'am, my mother was a clergyman's daughter, and if the clergy cannot tell what is right, I don't know who should, and she never brought us up with such strict notions of religion. I see no harm in a game of cards, and a little cheerful chit-chat; *God-amighty never* gave us our tongues for *nothing*.

Madam Toog. Yes, miss, I am quite of your way of thinking; but then while we are using our tongues in a way of harmless chat, we should not neglect, upon proper occasions, to use them for the purposes of our religion, in doing our duty, and *saying our prayers*; and I hope, my dear, you'll take your god-mother's advice till after you are confirmed; and properly prepare yourself for that before the bishop comes round next time.

Miss Polly. I hope it will not be necessary to submit to all this *trouble* for the salvation of my soul till I am a deal older.

Madam Toog. O no, miss; we must make some allowance for youth; when I was a *lass*, I confess I did not think it necessary to *take to religion so strictly* as I have done of late. I know that it requires a deal of resolution to submit to "the trials, and troubles, and discipline of a virtuous life."*

Consid. Why my wife and daughter have for above these four years *trudged* away to Mr. Lovegood's almost all weathers, and it is a long walk there and back again; and when I used to tell her the trouble she took, till I found it was a pleasure to go with her myself, her answer was, his "yoke is easy, and his burden light," and that "his ways are ways of pleasantness, and all his paths are paths of peace."

Madam Toog. O, sir, but I love to *mortify myself* in my religion.

Consid. Well, I am sure my wife does not mortify herself in her religion; for she is always as happy as she well can be, whenever she has a journey to Brookfield.—Pray, madam, do you *mortify yourself* when

* This expression, in its original form, is to be found in the writings of Dr. Priestley; so that all the absurdities deducible from it are not to be charged on the Old Lady, but on the Doctor, the oracle of the *rational* Dissenters of the day.

you are honest, just, or sober, or when you tell the truth?

Madam Toog. O, no, sir, I hope I know my duty better than all that.

Consid. Why then, madam, how is it that you mortify yourself when you serve God?

Spitef. Don't answer him, ma'am, I perceive he is upon the catch. If I had a wife and daughter who ran about at this rate, neglecting their duty at home, I would sooner break their legs than suffer it.

Consid. Why, sir, my wife never neglected her duty at home: a good wife she was before she went to Brookfield church, and a better ever since.

Miss Polly. Well, well, I see we shall have no cards if we are to talk about religion after this fashion. If you, Mrs. Toogood, and Mr. Considerate don't like to play, I can't see why the rest of us mayn't sit down to a game at whist, for we have all done tea.

Madam Toog. Becky Prateapace, my dear, will you ring the bell, that Nelly may take away the tea things, and bring the cards.

Miss Prateap. That I will, madam, with all my heart, and I'll have Mr. Wisehead for my partner, and you shall play with Mr. Spiteful, Miss Polly.

Miss Polly. I don't care who I play with, provided I may but have a game at cards.

[The cards are consequently introduced, the parties settle to the work, while the old lady and Mr. Considerate hold a *tête-à-tête* at one corner of the room. The reader would be little entertained at the idle frivolous conversation of the card table, the substance of which was from the fertile genius of Mr. Spiteful, who continued his occasional invectives, especially between the deals, against modern seducers and enthusiasts; and among other things was running them down for their pretended pharisaic sanctity for doing so much more than their neighbours. This, Mr.

Considerate overhearing, asked Mr. Spiteful how many scholars he had left at his free grammar school? and what he had year by year for the slight attendance he gave to two or three children, just by way of keeping up the name of a school? and whether it was not as great a crime for some to do too little, as for others to do too much? and whether it would be consistent to charge an honest hard-working day-labourer with such crimes because he would do three times the work of an idle careless fellow, who scarcely would do any work at all? This so irritated Mr. Spiteful that it threw him off his guard, and rendered him quite inattentive, when Miss Polly, as his partner, had also to lecture him for his negligence, declaring she had lost eighteen pence by him already, while the grave Mr. Wisehead was profiting by his folly; declaring she would play with him no more, unless he would mind his cards. Mr. Considerate joined with them, that there might be no more quarrelling, there had better be no more playing. The hint was accordingly taken; and as Miss Polly said she was quite out of luck, the cards were cleared away. The two misses and the old lady retired to one corner of the room for a little cheap talk in their way, and in the next Dialogue, the concluding part of the conversation will be presented to the reader.]

DIALOGUE XV.

CONTAINING THE SECOND PART OF THE SAME CONVERSATION, WHICH WAS THUS INTRODUCED BY MR. CONSIDERATE.

Consid. I SHOULD be glad to know, if any farther dispute should arise between us, how far we are to settle the controversy by the Bible: for I understand your notions of the Bible are very loose—at least as I suppose.

Wiseh. Just so far, sir, as it is consonant with reason, and no farther; I never can believe that which contradicts my reason.

Consid. Indeed, sir, if this be the case, we are likely to be terribly misguided; while reason, among our ignorant and benighted race, appears to be so much under the influence of prejudice and passion. If twenty men of different persuasions be called together, however flatly they may contradict each other, they would all tell you they are guided by reason.

Spitef. Well, sir, for all that, I am quite of Mr. Wisehead's opinion, that we have no business with the Bible, when it flatly contradicts our reason, though in all points we may not understand it. It would be a fine thing, surely, if we were to believe what we cannot comprehend, or else *go to hell and be damned!*

Consid. Why, then, sir, am I so to understand you and Mr. Wisehead, as to suppose you are

Atheists, for you cannot comprehend the incomprehensible attributes of God; or that you do not believe your own existence, because you cannot understand the nature of that existence? If you and Mr. Wisehead are only to believe the Bible so far as you can comprehend it, that book, in your opinion, is nothing better than a mere history of uncertain events; and then, notwithstanding revelation, we have nothing left us but to guess at religion as well as we can.

Wiseh. Sir, I believe the book, which we generally call the Bible, is but little more than the works of good men, subject to the same infirmities with ourselves: who, though they might have written according to the best of their judgments, were still frequently warped by their national prejudices in favour of their own religion.*

Consid. Indeed, gentlemen, if the word *conversion* should be inapplicable to young Mr. Henry Littleworth, yet it cannot be unsuitable to either of you; for Jews and Pagans believe a part of the Bible as well as yourselves, while neither you nor they give any more credit to it, as the Book of Revelation, than I do to the History of Robinson Crusoe.

Spitef. Why, really, Mr. Wisehead, I begin to be afraid we are going rather too far; this is making out the Bible to be but little better than an old ill-written ecclesiastical history. Though I don't approve Lovegood's notions at all the more for that.

Wiseh. Indeed, sir, if you wish to know more correctly "my opinion, what a Christian is bound to believe, with respect to the Scriptures, I am not afraid to answer, that the books, which are univer-

* See Priestley and other Socinian writers, *passim*.

sally received as authentic, are to be considered as faithful records of past transactions.”—“No Christian is answerable for more than this, the writers of the books of Scripture were *men*, and therefore *fallible*: but all that we have to do with them, is in the character of *historians* and *witnesses* of what they heard and saw; of course, their credibility is to be estimated like that of other historians, viz. from the circumstances in which they wrote, as with respect to their opportunities of knowing the truth of what they relate, and the biasses to which they might be subject. Like all other historians they are liable to mistakes with respect to things of small moment, because *they might not give sufficient attention to them*; and with respect to their *reasoning*, we are *fully* at liberty to judge of it as well as that of other men, by a due consideration of the propositions they advance and the arguments they allege.”—“And if such men have even communications with the Deity, it by no means follows that they are, in other respects, more wise and knowing than other men.”* This point, I suppose to be proved by the “*lame account*”† Moses has given of the creation and fall of man, having not the means of exact information; so that, to suppose “the books of Scripture were written by particular divine inspiration, is a thing to which the writers themselves make no pretensions; it is a notion destitute of all proof, and that has done great injury to the evidence of Christianity.”‡ As to Paul’s Epistles, therefore, and the other Epistles, I never can admit that the authors of them were immediately inspired for the purpose of writing them.

† See Priestley’s Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever, Part II. Pref. p. xiii. and Let. V.

† Priestley.

‡ Priestley’s Letters, p. 58.

Consid. Well, sir, this is speaking out with a witness. I don't think one Deist in ten would have spoken more decidedly against the Scriptures. Pray, sir, if such be your judgment on the Epistles, what are we to think of the Gospels?

Wiseh. O, sir, I have no doubt but all the four evangelists, as they are called, were very honest men, and that they wrote the "history of Jesus" according to the best of their judgment; though we suspect their genuine histories have been intermixed with many interpolations; and, it appears, that "some texts of the Old Testament have been *improperly* quoted by writers of the New," who it seems were sometimes "*misled* by Jewish prejudices."* Surely, therefore, it must be owned that "some obscurity" is left in the Scriptures themselves, which might *mislead* readers full of Heathen prejudices, and so left, it should seem, to whet human industry and the spirit of inquiry;† and "the Bereans are commended for not taking the word even of an apostle, but examining the Scriptures for themselves; whether the doctrine which they heard was true, and whether St. Paul's reasoning was just."‡ Such, sir, are the sentiments of all our great divines who have written on this subject.

Consid. Are we then to suppose that the Bereans searched the Old Testament Scriptures under any other idea but that their decisions were definitive? I should have thought, when they searched the Scriptures, they referred to them as an infallible guide. If they had only to look into the *lame account* Moses gives of matters, I do not know that

* Theological Repository. See Fuller's Systems, p. 238.

† Lindsey's Apology, ch. 2.

‡ Belsham's Sermon on the Importance of Truth, p. 39.

any thing but confusion could be the result of their diligence.

Wiseh. Well, well, sir, I cannot give up the point: we must be guided by our reason as it respects revelation.

Consid. Allow me then, sir, to ask you this plain question, If we are to be guided alone by our reason, while we are at liberty to doubt every word of Revelation; are we to call this Infidelity or Christianity? or is not Deism far more rational and consistent than such sort of Christianity?

Wiseh. O, sir, we are still believers in the Christian religion.

Consid. Why, then, Christian believers are at liberty to doubt the certainty of every truth of Revelation itself; even Jews and Mahommedans believe a part of the Bible, but deny the rest. I beg leave, therefore, farther to ask, if this be Christianity, what is Infidelity?

Wiseh. Sir, the question is easily answered; some few infidels doubt, whether there ever was such a person as Jesus Christ; and others of them think there is no future state; but we all believe there will be a future state, and that there was such a person as *Jesus, the son of Mary*; but then we do not conceive ourselves bound to believe the story of his miraculous conception, or his pre-existence, as it is called, or the strange inconsistent mysterious doctrine of the Trinity: and, among other "corruptions of Christianity," contrary to what we esteem the *rational* and "the true Gospel of Christ," we reject what is commonly called the doctrine of the atonement:" "in every shape and under every modification of it, it is unfounded in the Christian revelation."* Nor can we believe, that there is

* Belsham's Caution against Popular Errors, p. 15.

any such being as the Holy Spirit. Consequently we have nothing to do with the abstruse notion of regeneration, or, as it is called, the work of the Spirit; we believe that such sort of expressions are to be taken as *oriental figures*, or as "*tropical language*;" and, that it only means a good disposition. We, therefore, consequently, deny the popular doctrine of original sin,* as there is quite as much virtue as vice in the world: we have no doubt at all, as to the devil, that he is entirely a fabulous character; and as to what is said concerning those who were possessed of the devil, it were irrational to suppose, that it could mean any thing farther than that "they were mad, or had hysteric fits:" as to the existence of angels, "though there are *frequent allusions* to it in the New Testament," yet it is "*a doctrine that cannot be proved or made probable FROM THE LIGHT OF NATURE*;" and

* Mr. Belsham, in his discourse against what he calls Popular Errors, and from which Mr. Wisehead is now making extracts, speaking against original sin, insinuates, as though we believed in the damnation of infants. Can he be so ignorant of matters of fact as not to know that the insinuation is utterly false? I think he must know how universally it is admitted among the people he thus slanders, that the imputation of the first Adam's guilt is utterly done away, by the imputation of the second Adam's righteousness, among all those, who have not sinned wilfully or deliberately, after the similitude of Adam's transgression. We shall presently see other methods adopted, to evade the awful truth of man's depravity, as held forth in Scripture, and evidenced by universal experience; but, I think, the reader will not be a little struck with horror and surprise, when he notes the following extract from the above-mentioned sermon: "*This abominable doctrine [Original Sin] represents the wise and righteous Governor of the universe, as a more savage tyrant, than the most merciless despot that ever cursed the human race,*" p. 19. Such is the horrid language of one of those gentlemen who wish to be famed for their moderation!!!

* See "Infant Salvation," an Essay, &c.

what have we got to do with the New Testament, while it contradicts the light of nature? Notwithstanding, therefore, the *allusion*, we choose to say, "this is no where taught as a doctrine of revelation. A *judicious* Christian, therefore, will discard it from his creed; and, that, not only as a groundless, but as a *useless* and *pernicious* tenet, which tends to diminish our regard to the omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent God, and to excite superstitious respect to, and unreasonable expectations from, *imaginary* and *fictitious* beings."* When, therefore, we hear how Jesus was tempted of the devil in the wilderness, it was, (for we always talk very *rationaly* in our way,) only an *allusion to a fictitious being*; and the proper, and most *rational* meaning is, that he was fighting with some good and bad thoughts which alternately possessed him; but such were the Eastern metaphors and Oriental figures then in use.

Consid. Then, sir, might it not have sounded still more *rational* had you made it out that he was fighting with two Eastern metaphors, or Oriental figures? that when the angel spoke to Zacharias about the birth of John, the forerunner of our Lord, he should not have said, "I am Gabriel," but "I am an Oriental figure?" and that it was nothing but an Oriental figure that spoke to Mary on the same subject? and that Eastern metaphors, or Oriental figures appeared unto the shepherds, and sang "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men;" and then again, that our Lord had another meeting of these Eastern metaphors and Oriental figures in the mount of transfiguration? that an Eastern metaphor opened the prison in which Peter was confined, and that an Oriental figure knocked off his fetters? that Paul was converted at the sight of these Eastern

* Belsham's Caution, p. 21.

metaphors? that Stephen saw somewhat of the like sort when he was stoned? and that an Eastern metaphor stood by Paul when near shipwrecked? And if these be not enough, I could give you some farther lucubrations on your *rational* way of explaining these Eastern metaphors.*

* The Socinians suppose they have a right to take such preposterous liberties on this subject, because these spiritual existences are described as being "powers and virtues;" therefore they are not real existences, but figurative allusions. We will produce a few more passages where the real existence of such spirits is positively mentioned, and then we shall see how far common sense will befriend them in their rational religion.

Beelzebub, the prince of the devils—the prince of the eastern metaphors.

Unto which of the Angels (oriental figures) said he at any time, This day have I begotten thee? Let all the angels of God (eastern metaphors) worship him?

Our Lord cast out a whole legion of eastern metaphors from the man among the tombs, and the same set of eastern metaphors drove the swine into the sea.

"Whether there be thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers?" All tropical language—only eastern metaphors.

Christ "spoiled principalities and powers:" he spoiled eastern metaphors and oriental figures.

The ministering spirits "sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation," these are also to be understood as nonentities or oriental figures.

"The angels (oriental figures) who kept not their first estate."

"There was fire prepared for the devil and his angels," (for an eastern metaphor and his oriental figures)—But enough of this from the New Testament, by way of giving a fair specimen of the wisdom of those who can bestow such high compliments on themselves, and on the rationality of their religion.

A few instances from the Old Testament shall also be given as farther embellishments of these *rational* evasions.

An angel appeared to Manoah, foretold the birth of Samuel, and instructed him respecting his education: his appearance was very terrible or glorious; he did wondrously, and in the flame of a sacrifice ascended into glory. All this was done by an eastern metaphor.

Wiseh. Sir, all our great divines are not quite of the same way of thinking, concerning these matters; for some of them have thought, that St. Paul, when he conceived he saw the vision, was under a tempo-

An angel was commissioned to punish Israel with a tremendous plague, when David numbered the people; it is said, "the angel of the Lord stretched out his hand." N. B. Eastern metaphors have got hands; and again, the Angel of the Lord stood between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand. N. B. Tropical figures carry drawn swords. We are farther told, "The angel of the Lord stood by the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite." N. B. These standings, and movings, and actings, were all accomplished by an eastern metaphor.

The angel of the Lord that encamped around his people, when he brought them out of Egypt, first stood before them, and then went behind them. Strange, that nothing but a tropical figure should have had such an influence on Pharaoh and all his hosts!

Again, Abraham had a visit from three of these eastern metaphors, and he was so sure of their positive existence, that he prepared an entertainment for them. While the plentiful repast was all in the eastern style; and very properly, for he had to entertain three eastern metaphors. There was also a long conversation held between these eastern metaphors, and Abraham, Sarah, and Lot; and we are told of the great care they all took to deliver that righteous man out of Sodom. This is a notable proof what a wonderful book will be exhibited before the world, when their *rational* comment upon the Scriptures shall appear to *illuminate* the human mind.

The last instance which we will produce, out of a large variety, shall be taken from the history of Balaam. The ass of the soothsayer was thrice opposed by the angel of the Lord, that is, by an eastern metaphor, and by this means he crushed his foot against the wall. The Lord spoke to him, as through the mouth of the dumb ass, and thus "forbade the madness of the prophet." What a strange timid ass must Balaam's ass have been, to have been so afraid of a tropical figure; or what stupid asses must those be who thus interpret the word of God? or what brainless asses we all must be to abide by interpretations so preposterous and absurd? And if this be not sufficient to expose the folly of the saddusaic spirit of the day, nothing is.

rary derangement; and, perhaps, Stephen might have had a short phrensy-fit like Paul; and as for the story of the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness, that has been supposed to be nothing more than the narrative of a vision,—or “*a scenical exhibition of images upon the mind of the entranced prophet.*”*

Consid. So that it is to be supposed, that Christ slept forty days and forty nights, and afterwards related his dreams.

Wiseh. Sir, such is the way our divines have solved the difficulty.

Consid. Do you mean, by all this, to prove that your system, if it deserve the name, has nothing to do with infidelity?†

* Harwood’s New Testament.

† Had Mr. Considerate entered more deeply into the controversy by arguing from the authority of the Scriptures against the sentiments of Mr. Wisehead, according to his new notions of the volume of inspiration, it could have been of no avail; for if men of such sentiments cannot succeed, by quirks and quibbles, and by the aid of the most unnatural far-fetched interpretations, the next business is to invalidate the book itself, agreeably to the samples above given: so that it is impossible to deal with a Socinian, but as you would with a Deist. The arguments, therefore, taken up by Lardner on the Credibility of the Gospels, and again lately brought forward against the Deists by Paley,* will prove the best answers against the Socinian notions of the Bible. And I think those modern perverters of Christianity must know how widely they differ from the primitive Christians as it relates to the authority of the sacred volume. Brevity allows me to mention only some of the expressions during the first ages of the church, as they are to be found in Paley, p. 230—282. Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch, says, “these things the holy Scriptures teach, and all who were *moved by the Holy Spirit.*”—“Concerning the righteousness which the law teaches, the like things are to be found in the Prophets and the Gospels,

* Though no man has written better respecting the authenticity of revelation, yet few have gone so far in giving up many of the divine truths therein contained. His later publications, however, evidently manifest a nearer approach to the essential doctrines of the Gospel.

Wiseh. Sir, we disown the charge, we are not such infidels as to deny the divine mission of Jesus; though we believe he is in himself to be considered “as a mere man, and naturally as FALLIBLE AND PECCABLE, as Moses or any other prophet;* yet, that he was commissioned by the Supreme Being, to instruct mankind in the pure principles of morality, so far as he understood them; for, “though we admit that Jesus taught the truth in a *popular way*, yet we *very much doubt*, whether, in some instances, he properly and accurately understood it!!!†

Consid. Is this the voice of Mr. Wisehead, or the ghost of some departed infidel, that is uttering such dangerous and profane insinuations against the person and character of our blessed Lord? If this be

because that *all being inspired*, spoke by one and the same Spirit!” They are therefore frequently called the divine Scriptures—“the sacred fountain of truth:” and Origen (against Celsus,) declares, that both Jewish and New Testament Scriptures are believed in the churches to be *divine*.

Novatus says, that “Christ is not only man, but God also, is proved by the sacred authority of the divine writings.—The divine Scripture easily detects and confutes the frauds of heretics;” and he calls them “the heavenly Scriptures which *never deceive*.” Farther, in all the controversies between the Arians, Athanasians, and the admirers of Origen’s platonic notions, however some of them differed from the truths contained in the Scriptures, yet they always acknowledged their decision was definitive: That they were the certain guide to truth, given for that purpose by God himself: “The divinely inspired Scriptures.” I therefore observe, that the modern notion of the Bible, as it is now before us, presents us with one of the boldest attacks yet ever made on its sacred authority, and it is unsupported by all writers almost in every age of the church, nor can they produce in support of such sentiments any other argument than bold unqualified assertions from their own authority. Had they searched into antiquity, they would have been more modest and better taught.

* Priestley’s Letters to an Unbeliever, p. 33—35.

† Priestley on Necessity.

his just character, what good can we get by following such an uncertain leader? and what can we expect from the Bible itself; but that it will distract and puzzle the minds of all who read it?

Wiseh. Dear sir, I am sorry you should be so alarmed, but I only meant to soften matters by showing you, that it is no wonder if those well-intentioned men, who became the followers of Jesus, who was a *fallible and peccable man*, and had only a popular way of preaching what he did not *properly and accurately understand*: I say it cannot be wondered at, if they also blundered, and mistook matters still more frequently than their master.

Mrs. Toogood. Why, Mr. Wisehead, you quite shock me; it appears as though you believed next to nothing about our Blessed Saviour, or that there is scarcely either God or devil—though I don't join in with Mr. Lovegood, and his followers, in running down all man's merits; yet, I am sure, I don't know what we should do without our Saviour's merits also, to make up our deficiencies, after we have done our duty as well as we can.

Consid. Why, madam, I am not a little alarmed, as well as yourself; for, according to this, almost the whole of Christianity, allowed by reason, is, whether Jesus Christ was a good man or an impostor, and even that is a matter of doubt, for now it seems he is *peccable* as well as *fallible*.

Wiseh. Sir, I think I can make it out, that Jesus was *actually* peccable as well as fallible, though you seem to be so shocked at our "true Gospel," and *rational* notions of religion; and of this, I will give you an instance. He frequently accommodated his doctrine to the vulgar errors of the day: and I have before observed, that *the doctrine of angels and devils was a pernicious tenet, and which tended to diminish our regard to the omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent*

*God; and though Jesus was his mere servant, yet "he seems to use the word soul, as though expressive of something distinct from the body; but if he did, which, however, is not certain, he might do it in conformity with the prevailing opinion of the times, in the same manner as he applies being possessed of demons to madmen, and speaks to madmen as if they were actuated by evil spirits, though he CERTAINLY did not believe the existence of such demons.**

Consid. I think, sir, you have now done the business completely.

Spitef. Though I hate Lovegood's enthusiasm, yet I think you are almost as far gone in infidelity as he is in enthusiasm. I really did not suppose that your *rational* religion would have brought you to all this!

Wiseh. Sir, I am only "removing the rubbish, which loads and disgraces the foundation."†

Consid. It appears to me, as if you were not only clearing away what you call rubbish, but foundation and all; but have you done, sir?

Wiseh. No, sir; I confess there are other erroneous and irrational notions which we equally disapprove: for instance, "The doctrine of an intermediate state, or a state of conscious existence between death and the resurrection;" this must be "discarded, if we are desirous to regulate our faith by the *standard of reason*, of truth, and of Christianity."‡

Consid. Of Christianity! why did not Christ say to the thief, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise?"

Wiseh. Oh, sir, but you have not considered the proper *rational* interpretation of that text, as given by our learned divines; they only just alter the stop,

* Priestley on Matter and Spirit.

† Belsham's Caution.

‡ Belsham's Caution.

and then it reads—"Verily I say unto thee this day;—thou shalt be with me in Paradise."

Consid. A capital proof indeed this, of the *rationality* of your divines! but do they mean this as an argument or a joke? for, according to this, I might say to a poor man who was half starving, "Verily I say unto you this day;—I will give you a loaf of bread;" and when, for several days I delay my promise, and he accuses me of a breach of my word, I have nothing to do but to say, he did not understand my stops; and that I was not bound to fulfil my promise for a month after I had made it." And again, if a physician says—"To-day I say; I'll visit such a poor man, ill of a fever;" but still delays till his patient dies, and is accused of cruelty; yet all this arose from their neglect, in not observing to mind where the physician designed to have made his stops; and the same sort of joke, (for I cannot call it argument,) has been played off by your divines, on the words of Thomas, when he said, "My Lord and my God;" as if it was said in a fit of sudden surprise, and meant nothing. The exclamation can, therefore, only be accounted for, on the profane principle of "taking the Lord's name in vain." But it is well known that the Jews, even with a superstitious awe, abstained from mentioning the Lord's name, lest at any time they should take his sacred name in vain.

Wiseh. O, sir, if you do not like this interpretation, you should remember, that I have already proved, that Jesus was both *fallible and peccable*; so that, in this respect also, he might be under the necessity ("though I do not think that our Lord or his apostles rightly understood the doctrine of necessity,"*) of saying something *he did not believe, in conformity to the prevailing opinion of the times.*

* Priestley on Necessity.

Consid. Ah! sir, what shocking language is this! Did then our holy Redeemer not only preach lies, but even die with a lie in his mouth? And is all this to prove you are no infidel? Could any infidel upon earth advance a doctrine more abominable and profane? and can you wonder that so many of your sentiments make such an easy transition into downright infidelity itself? But have you any more rubbish to clear away?

Wiseh. Yes, sir, the obligation of sabbatical institutions.

Consid. Is that rubbish also?

Wiseh. Rubbish, sir, it is all Jewish rubbish, "that one day should be more holy than another; or that any occupation whatever, that is morally lawful on one day, should be morally unlawful on another, is a distinction unfounded in *reason*, wholly unauthorized by Jesus and his apostles, and unknown in the primitive and purest ages of the church."*

Consid. Why, then there would be no great harm directly as your Doctor, or Mr. Smirking, gets out of the pulpit, if all three of you were to run together to the play-house. But what a wonderful knack you gentlemen have of proving your point, by bold unqualified assertions, provided you bring your *rationality* to support them! According to my reading, however, the abstinence from menial labour that we might devote ourselves to God one day in seven, was ordained from the very creation of the world; and is therefore no new institution belonging to the Jewish economy; and this which also was from the very first, has been as invariably observed through the Christian dispensation. I am not a little surprised at the quick riddance you make of what you gentlemen call rubbish.

* Belsham's Caution, p. 26.

Wiseh. Sir, I have only followed a great author in our way, in what has been called *rubbish*; and, remember the last thing he mentioned as rubbish was, "the plenary inspiration of all the books, both of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, which he esteems an error, that an *inquisitive* and *judicious* Christian will see abundant reason to discard."*

Consid. I think that has been plentifully settled already. If the greatest prophet in all the Bible was but a *fallible* and *peccable* man, no wonder that we had nothing better than a *lame account* of matters from the rest of them; so that, from the Bible itself, the worst of errors have originated. Millions have positively been misguided thereby. Where one person is set right, at least a hundred have been led wrong, by the same book, and in a variety of instances; and so grossly misguided, as that a mere man is almost universally worshipped as the eternal God; and consequently, such have fallen into the grossest idolatry by the ill-judged language of its mistaken authors. Is not this making out the Bible to be the worst-written book in the world, which is only to be understood by a set of the most extravagant and far-fetched interpretations, invented by a set of men, who are pleased to set themselves up as being more *rational* than the rest of their neighbours? But have you now done with your rubbish, sir?

Wiseh. Not quite, sir; for another admired writer of ours speaks about some strange and *irrational* notions respecting heaven, as being rubbish.

Consid. What then, are our expectations of heaven and glory to be esteemed rubbish?

Wiseh. Why, sir, you know there are some visionary notions about intellectual happiness swim-

* Belsham's Caution, p. 27.

ming upon the surface of some people's brains, about a heaven independent of a material existence; and as our *reason* will not allow us to suppose there is any existence, but that which is material; so we consequently expect a material heaven, made up at least of some of the same enjoyments we have in our present state. We have no notion of that super-angelic state of happiness which some people are so fond of talking of.

Consid. Then it should seem your notion of heaven is very nearly similar to that of another great divine in the east, from whence the metaphors come, doctor Mohammed, who was also in many other points of your way of thinking; and he was quite as much a believer in Jesus, as a great prophet, as yourselves. Count Swedenborg has also diverted his admirers with the same sort of speculation respecting his views of a material heaven. Sir, will you entertain us a little longer with a farther descant on *your* material heaven?

Miss Polly (overhears.) Well, I confess I should like such a sort of heaven as yours best; I should not like to be psalm-singing and serving God to all eternity.

Miss Prateapace. And I should like the same sort of heaven as you do, Miss Polly. I should be afraid heaven would be a strange, melancholy and mopish place, if we had nothing better than religion.

Consid. But, ladies, I hope you won't interrupt Mr. Wishead in giving us a farther description of his expected heaven; I rather suppose he'll make it out to be a very curious place.

Wish. Sir, though you seem to ridicule my notions of a future state, yet I shall not be afraid to give you a full view of the happiness expected after the resurrection by those of our denomination, in

the words of one of our *wisest* and most *rational* divines: "The change of our condition by death, says this author, may not be so great as we are apt to imagine. As our *natures* will not be changed, but only *improved*, we have no reason to think that the *future world* (which will be adapted to our merely improved nature) will be *materially different from this*. And indeed why should we ask, or expect any thing more? If we should still be obliged to provide for our subsistence by exercise, or labour; is that a thing to be complained of by those who are supposed to have acquired fixed habits of industry, becoming rational beings, and who have never been able to bear the languor of absolute rest, or indolence? Our future happiness has with much reason been supposed to arise from an increase of knowledge. But if we should have nothing more than the means of knowledge furnished us as we have here, and be left to our own labour to find it out, is that to be complained of by those who will have acquired both a *love of truth*, and a habit of inquiring after it? To make discoveries ourselves, though the search may require time and labour, is unspeakably more pleasing than to learn every thing by the information of others. If the *immortality* that is promised to us in the Gospel should not be *necessary* and *absolute*, and we should only have the *certain means* of making ourselves immortal, we should have much to be thankful for. What the scriptures inform us concerning a future life is expressed in general terms, and often in figurative language. A more particular knowledge of it is wisely concealed from us."*

Mrs. Toog. 'Las, sir, I think you must be of the Sadducees' religion; for when I was reading the

* Priestley's Sermon on the Death of Mr. Robinson, p. 18.

psalms and lessons the other day, I minded how our Lord contradicted the wicked notion of the Sadducees about heaven; how that we then shall "neither marry nor be given in marriage, but be as the angels of God."

Wiseh. Our great divine, madam, has not settled that point; but the business about angels has been completely settled; they are only *allusions to imaginary beings*; so that the *fallible and peccable man Jesus, either through ignorance mistook, or through design misled, the people into one of the popular errors of the day.*

Mrs. Toog. Why, Mr. Wisehead, this talk is as bad as common cursing and swearing.

Consid. I think, madam, it is much worse than common cursing and swearing; for what is said on these occasions to prove our blessed God and Saviour was a *fallible and peccable man*, has been done after the most mature and deliberate consideration; and such serious charges against him must be the most blasphemous and profane; while, at the same time, it is urged, from those who pretend to serve a fallible and peccable man as the great prophet of the Christian church. I should certainly prefer reason to the Bible, if it can be proved that such a man who has *wilfully and deliberately deceived the people, contrary to his own judgment*, is supposed to be the principal character of that book. I am sure, that downright Deism is much preferable to such sort of Christianity; but, I think, you are now nearly arrived at the end of your journey; nothing is left but that you should positively deny the miracles of our Lord, and the resurrection, which, in my opinion, is still more beyond the reach of reason than any other doctrine of revelation; and then you will be as complete a Deist as Hume, Gibbon, or the blasphemous Tom Paine.

Wiseh. Why, sir, I hope you do not think me so far gone from the Christian religion as all that?

Consid. Why have not the Jews themselves acknowledged that you have renounced the Christianity their soul abhors?* and are not infidels your admirers? Thus, while we are left to the mere guidance of reason and nature, see what we get by attempting to correct the supposed errors of the Bible: and into what a labyrinth we are led by attempting to bring that book to our reason, instead of submitting our reason to the Bible. But while you conceive yourself at liberty thus to triumph in the powers of reason over the truths of revelation, let me ask you, how far you can farther triumph on the effects of such preaching over the hearts and conduct of the multitude of notorious sinners that abound in our land?

Wiseh. Sir, that is not our fault, but the fault of those who won't come to hear our ministers. Though we are sure our religion is *rational*, yet we lament it is not *popular*. But I hope, sir, we shall always make it evident, that we have too much respect to our characters to court the applause of the vulgar, in order that our ministers may be registered among the *popular* preachers of the day.

Spitef. Well said, Mr. Wisehead. Though I don't like you in all points, yet I do in this. I should be ashamed to be followed by such a mob as have taken to run after Lovegood, for the sake of hearing his *extemporaneous rant*. Why, they say his parish is made like a horse fair on a Sunday, by a set of people galloping after him from every quarter.

Consid. Ah! Mr. Spiteful, you never need fear the contempt of being a popular preacher!

Wiseh. A wise and judicious preacher never can

* See Levi's Letters to Priestley.

expect to be popular, as the common people are not likely to understand him. I don't think it is a proof that a man is a good preacher because he is popular, or that a man is a bad preacher because he is not followed by the inconsiderate multitude.

Consid. What then, is it a sign that a man is a good preacher because he has scarcely any one to hear him? and is a man a bad preacher because he is well attended? Pray, sir, what is the end of preaching? I should suppose, to instruct the ignorant. But if the ignorant can't understand the preacher, and will not even give him a hearing, because of his supposed wisdom and learning, where can be the good of it. It is said of our Lord himself, that "the common people heard him gladly:" and no wonder at it; "for he taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes:" and it is said of the preaching of John the Baptist, that "Jerusalem and all Judea, and the regions round about went after him." Were they bad preachers because they were popular? Is not that man the best preacher who does the most good? The question therefore has not been answered, but rather evaded, as it respects the utility of such a mode of preaching.

Wiseh. Really, sir, our Doctor and Mr. Smirking do their best endeavours, and if they have not been successful in reclaiming the vicious from the error of their ways; yet we hope that others who are already virtuous are kept in the ways of virtue.

Consid. It should seem, then, that your way of doing good, is that you do no harm; and it would be strange indeed, if by all your lectures against the deformity of vice, and on the beauties of morality, the people should lose the little they already possessed. But when you talk of the best endeavours being exerted, why is it that they are exerted

all in vain, as it respects the salvation of man from sin! I think, sir, I can tell you the cause of it. All Bible truths and Bible language are kept out of the question. Of what avail was all the moral philosophy among the heathens? and of what avail is all the heathenish bare-weight morality among too many professing Christianity in the present day, where the preaching of the Gospel, which alone is "the power of God unto salvation," is omitted?

Wiseh. "The power of God unto salvation!" Upon my word, sir, that sounds like a very odd expression. What am I to understand by it?

Consid. Why, sir, it is one of the odd expressions found in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans; but as those epistles are so low in your esteem, no wonder that such expressions sound in your ears so odd and uncouth. But in my opinion, it is an expression of peculiar wisdom, dignity, and strength. I am not afraid to assert it, that all true religion is nothing less than the power or influence of God himself on the heart. And must there not be a principle before ever there can be a practice? can any persons be reformed before they are renewed? and after all, can much of the preaching of the present day be even called *moral preaching*? How often are we told how much less is required of us in our *lapsed* state than was originally demanded by the law! and how many apologies are at times brought forth to palliate the vices and deep corruptions of the human mind! Is this preaching morality, or the quintessence of antinomianism?*

Wiseh. I really think, sir, you strain matters a deal too hard, and that your ideas are much too gloomy as they respect the human race. That there are some among whom the protuberances and excres-

* This expression is derived from the Greek, and means that which is *against the law*.

cences of vice are very predominant, we cannot but admit: but still I suppose it is the virtuous habit that principally prevails, and we should not depreciate the virtues of mankind on account of their vices. A great divine of our denomination has given it as his opinion, that “there *may* be a considerable preponderance of virtues even in characters justly estimated as vicious: and likewise that the *quantity* of virtue in the world *may* far exceed that of vice; though the *number* of virtuous characters *may* be less than that of vicious ones:” and again, “few characters are flagrantly wicked; and perhaps, *even in the worst of men*, good habits and actions are *more numerous than the contrary*. Certainly they are so in the majority of mankind, and preponderant virtue is almost universal;”* and if there be a small degree of troublesome vice in the world, another able divine, who is the glory of our denomination, in a very learned treatise he wrote on the doctrine of necessity, has settled the business completely, by proving that “God is the author of sin, and may do evil, provided good may come.”†

* Belsham’s Review of Wilberforce, p. 39.

† On Necessity, p. 117—121. Now would any one think it, that those very people who have taken such an astonishing alarm at the frightful doctrines of Calvinism, have actually found their refuge in the sentiments of the worst of infidel philosophers, making it out, that God himself is the author of sin; and that is their way of getting rid of what God has revealed, that he “made man upright,” but man has “sought out” for himself “many inventions.” Thus, by contradicting the Bible account of the fall, which lays all the evil of sin to the charge of man, they bring it home against God himself, with this reserve only—provided that good may result from it in the end; which is making the Divine Being to speak and act like the worst of men, who say, “Let us do evil that good may come;” whose damnation is just. Let such a deity be adored by these sons of *reason* as long as they choose; but let my wisdom lie low before the altar of revelation:—“O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help.”

Consid. Why, then, vice is not only to be little thought of, but seems almost allowable, provided, according to your conceit, virtue preponderates; or according, I must call it, to your blasphemous proposition, that God can be the author of evil. But can you for a moment suppose that the least vice should be admitted before our most holy God, when it is said, “that for every idle word man shall speak he shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment;” yea, that he will bring “every thought into judgment?” as every lascivious thought before him is adultery, and every angry thought not less than murder in his sight. Shall we try how this rule will bear between man and man? Suppose Mr. Dolittle, our Justice, were to say of the thief when brought before him, He generally pays for his goods as he purchases them, though now and then he is under the necessity of stealing to make his payments good: so that when he acts the part of a knave, it is with an honest and virtuous design. Therefore, we must not be too severe with him; for he is an honest fellow, on the whole; and his honest actions outweigh his thievish ones. And again; should the mad drunkard say, I never got drunk above twice in the week, and then all the rest of my time I am very sober: surely, you’ll not call me a drunkard upon that account, as I hope my sober fits are more than my drunken ones. Or shall we suppose the common reprobate to plead his cause, by saying, I don’t swear near half my time, and these are but thoughtless words; and words can hurt nobody: and let me swear ever so often, I say more good words than bad ones, and scarcely ever neglect *saying my prayers* before going to bed. Now should we suppose, for the sake of argument, that there is more virtue than vice in the world, which I really doubt, notwithstanding your low notions of virtue being no higher, as far as

I can make them out, than a little morality or good manners, or just and civil behaviour between man and man; yet are you not alarmed at your own sentiments, that the same sort of ideas of justice is supposed to exist in God, as would turn all things into confusion among men? Such, however, have been the dreadful effects of lessening the eternal obligations of the law, in order that we may obey it just so far as we like best; and such are the *antinomian* principles of all the pharisees and formalists on the earth.

Spitef. Sir, though I cannot altogether go with Mr. Wisehead, yet your strict notions of religion are enough to drive us all into despair. I am for just such a religion as Mr. Archdeacon Smoothtongue preached to us before the corporation the other day. You remember his text, sir:—"Men shall be lovers of their own selves." I am sure, sir, it was an admirable sermon.

Wiseh. Yes, sir, I admired it much. I thought it an excellent *rational* discourse; for though I should not like to be a conformist to the established church, by subscribing to the "horrid dogmas of Calvin," which are to be found in such plenty in the Articles and Liturgy of the Church of England; yet I am not such a bigot as to neglect an opportunity of hearing a good sermon in either church or meeting.

Spitef. We had better not touch upon that point, Mr. Wisehead; as that would bring on a controversy which, I am sure, we should not end to-night. But I know all you Dissenters are of opinion, that none but Lovegood's followers give us the true meaning of the doctrines of the church of England; but this is thinking very hard of the clergy.

Wiseh. Sir, I confess this is the universal opinion among all Dissenters; but I should not wish to touch you in a sore place.

Consid. From what has transpired this evening, it would be rather dangerous, in my opinion, to touch Mr. Spiteful in any of his sore places, as at times he is very apt to wince; but, I must confess, I differ with both you gentlemen very widely, respecting the goodness of Mr. Archdeacon Smoothtongue's sermon. First, I think when a man takes a text, he should explain the meaning of it. Now that text, as it stands in the Bible, evidently was designed to show the evils of self-love, that it is a vicious principle in itself, and productive of evil in all its consequences; whereas the preacher turned it right about, and made it speak for a doctrine, which, according to the word of God, it was his duty seriously to oppose.

Spitef. Well, sir, and did not the Archdeacon say that the *extreme* of self-love might be a vicious principle, though *in moderation* it was necessary for the benefit of mankind?

Consid. Yes, sir, I heard all he had to say, and with a considerable degree of attention: but really, I believe it will be with some difficulty that I can be persuaded to give up a point, on which the interest of holiness, and the glory of God so much depend. In my opinion the ultimate end of every action should arise from a supreme love of God; and all subordinate love to ourselves and our fellow creatures is vicious and corrupted, but as it centres in our love towards him: likewise all the wickedness and oppression there is in the world arises from this corrupted principle of self-love. When men love themselves, independent of God and godliness, they must be little better than devils of course. Such, however, is the avowed principle of that thorough-paced French infidel, Volney; and in order to make the world twenty times more wicked than before, he

has reduced it to a system: and we all know what has been the result of that doctrine in his own nation at large. To speak plainly, I look upon it, that such sort of preaching is nothing better than infidelity in disguise; and as a proof of it, how nearly the Arch-deacon appears to be of the same stamp, I don't know that he quoted a single passage out of the Bible after he had taken his text.

Wiseh. O sir! you know there are a great number of expressions in the Bible that now sound in these *modern* days of Christianity, very barbarous and uncouth; and I really think, that those gentlemen who have the care of educating the young men of our denomination for the ministry, do well in advising them not to *interlard* their sermons with too many texts of Scripture, as it could not but prove greatly detrimental to the elegance of their compositions; and if we can but reform the depraved taste of the day, by attending to our compositions, we have no doubt, but that we shall be as popular as any of our opponents.

Spitef. Really, sir, I am afraid you will quite overshoot the mark; you seem to make next to nothing of the Bible. You are giving Mr. Considerate a sad handle against yourself.

Wiseh. Why you may be assured of this, Mr. Spiteful, that you never will be able to get the better of Mr. Considerate in point of argument, if he suppose he carries the question by quoting the epistles of Paul and the "histories of Jesus." And I can give you a proof of this, which is quite to the point. A gentleman in the present parliament, and who is also nearly related to the family of the Worthies in this neighbourhood, thought proper to turn author in divinity, and took it in his head to bring forward a long string of such antiquated notions in religion as

are now entirely exploded among all *rational* divines; and as you may suppose, in order that he might support his cause, his arguments were deduced from St. Paul's, and the rest of the Epistles.* Some weakly attempted to shake the ground he had taken, by arguing against him from the same authority: but an able divine of our denomination† stepped forward and did the business completely, by showing that no conclusive argument could be drawn from a set of letters which were no farther worthy of estimation, than as letters written by good men, who were still liable to err as well as ourselves. Thus he battered down the place of defence, in which our author supposed himself impregnable, and turned him forth to fight us in the open field of *reason* and speculation; and there, I'll assure you, as you may suppose, he *had him* completely; but while you make so much of the Bible, and while you suppose the authors of it were all *inspired*, you'll never be able to deny the truth of Mr. Lovegood's doctrine.

Spitef. What, then, am I to believe that all their strange notions of grace and faith without works, are contained in the Bible? that man has no free will; and that if a man be one of the elect, let him do whatever he will, he *sha'n't be damned*; and if he be a reprobate he must *go to hell and be damned*, if he is ever so good, and strives to be saved as much as ever he can?

Madam Toog. O shocking, Mr. Spiteful! Is it possible that any one can preach such bad doctrines as all that?

Consid. Mr. Spiteful, madam, is fond of high co-

* Wilberforce's Practical View, &c.

† See Belsham's Review—For a full answer to this pernicious book, and a defence of Mr. Wilberforce, see *Williams' Vindication of the Calvinistic Doctrines*, &c. 8vo.

louring; but I perfectly agree with him that we may look into the Bible for sentiments like these, and never find them.

Wiseh. Though I can by no means admit Mr. Lovegood's notions in religion to be rational, yet it cannot be said that he or his followers carry matters so far as you represent them: and as to Mr. Lovegood, I believe him to be a *good-hearted man*, though his sentiments in *theology* so widely differ from mine.

Consid. (to Mr. Spiteful.) Now, sir, I am sure Mr. Lovegood never holds forth justification without its fruits, as you seem to represent him. I myself heard him explain matters quite otherwise, but a fortnight ago: and very much to my satisfaction. He always tells us, that, as there are none righteous, so none can be justified by their righteousness; and that though we are justified and saved by the merits and death of Jesus Christ only, yet that we are not to "continue in sin that grace may abound." He observed on that occasion that the king never pardons a thief, that he may have a license to cheat and steal as long as he lives; and that all such crimes committed after a pardon are deemed twenty times worse than those committed before. Besides, he talks much of the need and necessity of the Holy Spirit to change our hearts: and have you never ridiculed him on that score? Pray, sir, what do you yourself think we mean by that doctrine?

Spitef. How should I know, sir? It is strange indeed, that you should ask me about your meaning, as though I should know better than yourself, when you are so fond, with your wife and daughter, of *gadding about* after Lovegood. But I heard that he should have said, but a few Sundays ago, from one that heard him, "Now we conclude a man is justified by faith only, *without the deeds of the law.*"

What do you think of that, sir? A fine fellow truly, to make such consequential conclusions, while he holds forth such abominable doctrines!

Consid. Why, sir, it is very unfortunate, that you should have blundered upon the express words of scripture, and suppose them to be the words of Mr. Lovegood, and especially as you have been just vindicating the Bible, I wonder that you should be so ignorant of its contents.

Spitef. Sir, it is impossible. I say it is impossible. (*To Mrs. Toogood.*) Mrs. Toogood, madam, lend me your Bible; (*To Mr. Considerate*) and then, sir, you shall find them if you can.

Madam Toog. L—d, sir;* you can't want the Bible, now you have just done playing at cards.

Wish. Really, Mr. Spiteful, I would not have you put it to the test, for I remember reading some such words not very long ago; and I recollect it shocked me, when I thought of it, what a bad use vulgar minds would be liable to make of such sort of expressions.

Consid. Yes, sir, I believe you'll find the passage in the third of the Romans; but I don't think we need to be shocked at the consequences of free forgiveness, when it is always connected with the idea of holiness; "that we may live unto his glory who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light."

Spitef. And I suppose, sir, that you think the horrid notions of predestination are also to be found in the Bible; but I am sure they are not.

Consid. I am sure they are not as well as yourself, as you have represented them; nor yet where you

* These sort of religious old ladies are very apt to take the Lord's name in vain.

have placed them, in the brains of good Mr. Lovegood. I have heard in the word of God of "an election according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience;" and that "we are predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's dear Son:" but an election *from* sin, that we may live *in* sin, is a doctrine as much abhorred by Mr. Lovegood, as it can be by you. No, sir! Mr. Lovegood is better taught to distinguish between causes and effects; and he always insists upon it, that the effect of our election is, that we may "live unto God;" and as to his opinion relative to the freedom of the will, I hope we have had enough upon that score already.

Wiseh. I am sure we have, sir: for it has given me such a head-ache, that I have felt it ever since. (*To Mrs. Toogood.*) Can you give me a pinch of your cephalic snuff, madam?

[*The snuff box is handed; Spiteful continues.*]

Spitef. I have no sort of doubt, but that Lovegood knows how to gloss over his abominable tenets. He is an artful fellow; and if all be true, as wicked as any of us,—and no wonder at it, from the doctrines he preaches. There is a fine story gone all round the country about him, and I'll warrant it is all true.

Consid. What is that, sir? I have heard it reported, that my wife is too intimate with the parson. Is that the story you have got hold of? But instead of being jealous on that score, I wish her to be yet more intimate. I am sure she cannot have a more excellent and instructive acquaintance; and I now mean to go myself with her and my daughters, much oftener than I have done; though, being one of the corporation, I am expected at Mapleton church

more than I could wish.—But, pray what is the story?

Spitef. Why, have you not heard how *Parson Lovegood* has persuaded a lady to leave her husband; because he would not be converted to his religion, as well as herself; and that she would not live with him, because he was a *carnal man*, according to their *canting* way of talk: while, *madam*, with all her *pretended sanctity*, is *carnal* enough to admit the *parson* to come and see her as often as he likes; and there he keeps her at *Ned Swiggs*, at the *Golden Lion*; and some say *Mr. Worthy*, with all his religion, is admitted to pay her the same sort of visits; and that *Mrs. Worthy* is quite jealous upon the occasion.

Madam Toog. O shocking! shocking! Well, I always thought *Lovegood* must be a very bad man at heart, from the first sermon I ever heard him preach; for no one, I am sure, could have made out all people to be so very wicked, if he had not been a very wicked man himself; and from that time I was determined *never* to hear him *no* more.

Consid. Why, *madam*, I think we had all better have been at cards, though it is the week before sacrament, than talk scandal against the innocent; but I have heard, from my wife and others, a very different story to what is now made out.

Spitef. Ay, ay, they give it out that the lady was the gentleman's mistress; and that, when she saw the evil of her ways, by one of *Lovegood's* *preachments*, she would not live with him any longer; but he swore again and again by his *Maker*, that she was his lawful wife, and that he would soon prove it.

Consid. You know the old proverb, "they that swear will lie;" and I have no doubt but the up

rightness of Mr. Lovegood's conduct will soon appear.

Spitef. They may preach up their innocence as long as they like; but Mr. Bluster, of Revel Hall, knows the family very well; and Mrs. Scandal, his aunt, says, she could take her oath of it, that it is a fact.

Madam Toog. Yes, and she was going to tell me all about it one morning, when she met me at Friday prayers; but I had not time to stop to hear it all.

Miss Prateapace. Yes, and Mrs. Tittletattle was at our house the other day to tea, and told us a great deal about it; I am sure, Lovegood must be a very wicked man if it is true.

Consid. And, I am sure, you are all acting a very wicked part if it is false.

Spitef. False! how can it be false? are they not always prating and preaching about faith without works, though you pretend to deny it? and what can be expected among those who hold such loose notions of religion? Why, to be sure, a conduct as loose as their religion: every body knows it is all free grace with them, that they may live as they list. I am afraid these abominable fellows will soon overturn both church and state.

Consid. Why, Mr. Spiteful, what can ail you to-night, to run on at this rate?

Spitef. Why, have you not seen Bishop Bluster's Charge against these mock reformers, proving that, under the mask of a great zeal for religion, they are, notwithstanding, *Infidels* and *Atheists*?*

Consid. How can you, in your conscience, think so, while, by Sunday schools, and every possible

* It seems, a charge not very dissimilar to Bishop Bluster's, made its appearance about this time.

exertion these people are doing all they can for the reformation of mankind?

Spitef. Fine reformers, truly! when, under the pretence of a reformation, their design is by their seditious machinations, to throw all things into anarchy and confusion: and the Bishop says, this he knows to be a matter of fact. I wonder government does not stop their progress!

Consid. What! is it a matter of fact, that some attempt to make people infidels and atheists, by directing them to read their Bibles, and attend on the public worship of God? and as to the charge of sedition, malice can say any thing, but stops to prove nothing.

Wiseh. Bishop Bluster, sir! who is Bishop Bluster? Being a dissenter I am not so well acquainted with the names of the bench of bishops.

Spitef. Why, sir, he is not only a man of very high blood, for he is cousin german to Mr. Bluster of Revel Hall, but a very learned man, I will assure you.

Consid. As far his learning, that I shall not attempt to dispute; but if a person wilfully, deliberately, and publicly, bears false witness against his neighbours, by urging such cruel charges without any evidence to substantiate the fact, while he can thus directly transgress the ninth command, it is no proof of his integrity: suppose any one should wantonly charge him in return, that he was a common swearer, a liar, a gambler, a Sabbath-breaker, and register him among the meanest of common swindlers, as running into every one's debt, and paying nobody till compelled by law, and all without the least evidence to substantiate the fact, how would he like it?

Wiseh. Though I do not like Mr. Lovegood and his doctrines, yet I do not think either he or any of

his sect are quite so bad as you make them out; he certainly is very charitable in his parish. I wonder how he can do so much, for they say his living is but very small; and he has an increasing family.

Spitef. Ah! but I'll warrant it is Mr. Worthy's purse that helps him out; they don't mind their money, provided they can but bribe people to be of their religion.

Consid. Why is it, then, sir, that you cannot get Mr. Bluster to bribe some people, after the same manner, to be of your religion; for whenever you preach, it seems yours is but *a very little flock*.

Spitef. I do not mind your sneers, sir, but I have not half done yet; for there is Mr. Feigning, Mr. Worthy's steward, *a rascal*; and then I have heard a fine story of Mrs. Fairspeech, *a drunken sow*.

Consid. Sir, you need not spend your breath on such subjects: for hypocrites there always were, and always will be; but nothing can be more cruel and unjust than to charge the crimes of hypocrites on those who are upright and sincere.

Thus Mr. Spiteful was proceeding in the most vehement manner, and in which he would probably have proceeded for a considerable while longer, had he not been interrupted by his servant, who was sent after him from his house at Mapleton to Madam Toogood's, with the following letter:

“REV. SIR,

Wednesday Noon.

With great difficulty, I yesterday came from Revel Hall in Mr. Bluster's chaise. On Sunday after the second service, I went to his house, according to appointment, that I might be present on Monday at the coursing match. My mare, you know, is rather spirited, and every now and then the young sparks that were there, smacked their whips and gave

her a cut; and, you know, if we, of our order, choose to keep company with the great, we must submit to such rubs as these. However so it was, that while we were all on the full speed, on a chase, my mare with the rest of the company, attempted to clear a wide ditch, but missed her aim, and left me behind her. I unfortunately fell head-foremost, and must soon have been suffocated in the mud and water, had not the game-keeper, with the assistance of others, with great difficulty pulled me out. It was a fortunate circumstance that the bottom of the ditch was so soft, otherwise I must have been more severely bruised by the fall; but I still feel myself so much hurt, about the neck and shoulders, that I can scarcely sit upon my bed to write these few lines, to request you to undertake my duty for me, till I am recovered; or till the return of my curate, Mr. Brisk, who is gone with Lord Rakish to Gambleton races, and who has some hopes of preferment from that quarter. I expect him to return in about a week or ten days, when I shall release you from all farther trouble.

I was engaged this evening to give the sacrament to Mrs. Formal, who is not likely to live many days: if you will call upon her and perform that office for me, you will much oblige your humble servant,

RICH. DOLITTLE.

P. S. I could avail myself of the assistance of Mr. Goodman; but, as I have reason to believe, he has of late had a strong bias in favour of Mr. Lovegood's notions in religion, I should be much afraid to lend him my pulpit."

Mr. Spiteful having read the letter to himself, exclaims:

Oh, poor Mr. Dolittle, he has met with a dreadful fall from his horse, and he wants me to administer the sacrament to Mrs. Formal, who is supposed to be near death.—What can I do? I must go away directly.

Madam Toog. Why, sir, you are not prepared: you can't go away from the card table to administer the holy sacrament.

Spitef. Well, I cannot help it, I must take it as I find it; I wish I had been at something else.

[Mr. Wisehead, twisting his thumbs one over the other, sat and said nothing.]

Madam Toog. But, I hope, sir, nothing material has happened to Mr. Dolittle: do stop awhile and tell us before you go: if it is not too bold, I should be glad to know what he says of this unfortunate accident.

Spitef. Well, well, as the whole of it must soon be known, far and wide, you may take and read it, if you like,

[The letter is handed to Madam Toogood, and she gives it to Miss Prateapace.]

Madam Toog. Becky Prateapace, my dear, will you read it? My eyes are got very dim, and I don't like to read by candle light. [*The letter is read out.*]

Madam Toog. O, poor gentleman! but Mr. Spiteful, did you not hear of it before you left Mapleton?

Spitef. I heard that he had a bad fall from his horse.

Consid. Hear of it, madam? I suppose it is all over the town by now. But as Mr. Spiteful had so much to say against Mr. Lovegood, I thought I would have the less to say against Mr. Dolittle; especially, as you so much admire him as a minister.

Madam Toog. Why, to be sure, sir, he is an excellent man in the pulpit.

Consid. A thousand pities, madam, if that be the case, but that he should always be kept in it, and never let out again, when he is once found there. In my opinion, however, a bad man out of the pulpit can never be a good man in the pulpit.

Madam Toog. I am very sorry Mr. Dolittle should have been so let down.

Consid. Why, by all accounts, he has been completely *let down*, and *let down* more than once on the same unfortunate day; for after the Rector was with some difficulty heaved out of the ditch, neither his hat nor wig could be found for a considerable time, as they were both driven so deep into the mire.

Madam Toog. Dear sir, I hope the Rector was not obliged to ride home without his hat and wig.

Consid. Why, ma'am, it happened just then, that there was an old woman gathering some sticks up and down the hedge, and after she had lent a helping hand to scrape off some of the dirt, she next kindly took her red cloak from off her own back, and put it round Mr. Dolittle's head and shoulders: but as for his riding home, that was quite out of the question; for as soon as his mare found herself at liberty, she took to her heels, and soon arrived at her own stable door at Mapleton: and that first gave the alarm to the town, to see the mare return with her saddle and bridle, and without her master. Besides, had the mare stopped for her master, he was too much bruised to mount her again.

Madam Toog. Poor gentleman, how did he get home?

Consid. Why, if not in a very creditable, yet as it then proved a very convenient carriage. It was in a dung cart, madam, which happened just then to be

employed in carrying dung into some of the neighbouring fields.

Madam Toog. O dear! why did they not send to Mapleton for a chaise? or why could not Mr. Bluster have sent home for his chaise? I would have sooner parted with twenty pounds out of my pocket than that he should have been carried in that manner.

Consid. Why, madam, would you have had him to have continued trembling and quaking all over mud and dirt, in the cold till a chaise could have been brought? How could they do better, under such circumstances, than to put the Rector in the cart, and then drive him home as fast as he could bear it? though to be sure, had he been brought home in a chaise, he would have escaped his second let down.

Madam Toog. Dear sir, what was that? it quite frightens me. Becky Prateapace, reach me my smelling bottle. [*The old lady takes a snift.*]

Consid. Why, you know, madam, calamities of this sort seldom come alone, and so it happened now; for the Rector was first hoisted into the cart and seated on the old woman's bundle of sticks, while she sat on the one side, and Mr. Bluster's servant on the other as his supporters. Thus he rode to Revel Hall, shivering with cold, and groaning with pain, all the time; but through the carelessness of the plough boy, who drove the cart, which was made to tilt the dung into the field, (not having properly attended to the pin) while they were preparing to heave the Rector out, they were all tilted down together; and what between the groanings of the Rector, and the laughing of the spectators, to see him and the old woman, with her bundle of sticks, and the servant, all sprawling together on the ground, such a sight, I suppose, was never exhibited in that yard before.

Madam Toog. I am afraid this will make a sad talk

about the town, especially as Mr. Dolittle made such a fine sermon, last Sunday, proving that our clergy were the successors of our Saviour and his apostles.

Spitef. Ay, and all this will be *nuts* for Lovegood and his *schismatical crew*.

Consid. Indeed, sir, you ill know the character of that good man; no person can be more grieved at the improper conduct of the pretended ministers of the Gospel than himself; and if all acted as he does, I am sure, the blessed cause of Christianity would not suffer half the jeer and contempt it now sustains on account of the bad lives of its professors, especially of its professing ministers, however denominated; and, instead of a set of people belonging to any church, urging the foolish boast that they are the successors of our Lord and his apostles, it would be much more to the point, if they would but preach their doctrines, and imitate their examples. Good and bad there will be of all parties; but these things prove to me, the reality of the Christian dispensation, since nothing but its own native simplicity and purity could have preserved it in existence, while placed in the hand of such teachers, whose lives are so contrary to its holy designs.

[Mr. Spiteful being wanted at Mapleton, rose up in haste, and sought for his hat and cane. The cane being mislaid, he scolded Madam Toogood's maid, and according to an accustomed expression of his, called upon *the devil** to know where it was, and

* A very favourite mode of speech with Mr. Spiteful. See the *Anti-Jacobin Review*, *passim*.

The reader may easily judge from this hint and from the spirit and temper of the Rev. Mr. Spiteful, who had a deal of leisure time, that he was a very great scribbler for the *Anti-Jacobin Review*, the *Orthodox Churchman's Magazine*, the

when found, *trudged off* to administer the sacrament to Mrs. Formal, as fit for the office as was another of the same stamp, who was called from a puppet show on a similar occasion. After this the rest of the company speedily dispersed.]

Porcupine, and some other publications of the same stamp; and any one may naturally suppose, from the low and scurrilous style of his conversation, that his productions were greatly admired by all the editors of that class of periodical publications.

DIALOGUE XVI.

BETWEEN MR. WORTHY, MR. LOVEGOOD,
EDWARD, AND MRS. CHIPMAN.

MORE NEWS FROM LOWER BROOKFIELD, PROVING THE EFFICACY OF THE GOSPEL ON THE VILEST OF SINNERS; OR, THE EVILS OF SEDUCTION DELINEATED.

EDWARD, the landlord of the Golden Lion, whose conversion was noticed in a former Dialogue, comes to Mr. Lovegood, and begs his advice.

Edward. Sir, if I don't interrupt you, I should be glad to lay before you the case of an unfortunate, but, I believe, a really penitent young woman, now at our house.

Lovegood. You know, Edward, I always love to attend to every circumstance relative to poor penitents.—Sit down, and tell me your story.

Edw. Why, sir, you may have heard that a gentleman, at least by his looks, took lodgings, at a private house in our village, with a very fine gay-looking young woman, and every one thought she was his wife. They came about a fortnight ago to our church; and, a few days after that, she came to our house in much distress, and without the gentleman with whom she lived. This made me think it necessary to tell her, that we were very cautious who we took into our house, and then pointed her to our rules. She looked at a few of them, threw herself back in the chair and quite fainted away.

Mrs. Loveg. Oh! my dear, how I was struck, at
VOL. I.—25

her appearance, when she first came to our church! You no sooner began to preach, than she was all attention; and was oftentimes melted into tears; and since then, though she has come without the gentleman, she has constantly attended; even last Wednesday she was there at the lecture, though it rained so hard. I cannot but hope, that God has sent a signal blessing home to her heart! how thankful I am, that the Lord continues to make your ministry such a blessing among us.

Loveg. Why, my love, you know I have often said, that, independent of the preacher, however feeble his abilities may be, nothing is attended with such a glorious efficacy as the simple preaching of the Gospel of Christ. (*To Edward.*) But, Edward, what is her story?

Edw. O sir, she tells me the most affecting story I ever heard in all my life: how she was seduced from her husband, by the artful wicked man who has brought her into these parts; and as soon as she was convinced of her evil ways, he left her; and she has been at my house ever since, crying and sobbing enough to break one's heart, and when my wife attempts to comfort her, she begins weeping again, twice as much as before; and says, you have been a faithful wife to a kind and an affectionate husband; but, O! what a wicked and ungrateful monster I have been! She will then ask us if she can do any thing for us, if it was only to work at her needle, stand at the washing-tub, or even weed in the garden, as she fears, since the gentleman has left her, she shall not be able to pay for her board? But, with your leave, sir, she wishes she may lay her unhappy case before you; as she much desires your advice.

Loveg. With all my heart, Edward, but it will be necessary to have other evidence, to hear what

she may have to relate on such a story; and I have no doubt but Mr. Worthy, always ready for every good word and work, will attend and assist me with his wise and good advice. I will call upon him to-morrow morning, and send you word directly when she shall attend. But what is her name?

Edw. Her proper name, it seems, is Chipman, though she came into these parts under the name of Lady Dash; but if ever that name is mentioned to her, she cries, O, let me never hear of the horrid name of Dash any more.

Loveg. Well, Edward, in a day or two you shall hear from me again; in the interval present her with this book for her perusal. [Mr. Lovegood gives him "Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul," and retires.]

On the following day she was sent for to Mr. Lovegood's. Mr. Worthy attended: the young woman was introduced by Edward, agitated and in deep distress.]

Loveg. Come in, my unfortunate fellow-sinner, sit down until your mind is a little composed, and tell us of your calamities.

[She falls into strong hysterics, and at intervals cries: O my dear husband, his heart will be broken! O my lovely forsaken babe! what a brute! O my most dear and tender father! what a monster! She afterwards a little recovers, and cries, How can you admit so vile a wretch into your doors? what an ungrateful monster have I been before God and man!]

Loveg. But the vilest of sinners may be saved.—Be calm; and let us hear the cause of your distress. [After several attempts Mrs. C. thus begins her story.]

Mrs. Chipman. Ah, sir, I have grieved the best of parents; forsaken the tenderest of husbands; have

left my dear babe behind me; and all through the pride and wickedness of my own heart, in suffering myself to be seduced by the worst of men.

Loveg. But if you are not somewhat more particular in relating your calamities, I feel it will scarcely be in our power to assist you with our advice.

Chipm. Sir, my father, whose name is Reader, was the best of husbands to my mother, the kindest of parents to his children; and a man of strict integrity among his neighbours. He was, by profession, a school-master in a small town called Locksbury, in the West of England; and, being well-informed himself, he gave me a good education. But his family afflictions have been very severe: for my eldest brother was born an idiot, my next brother took a very wild turn indeed, and my father does not know whether he is dead or alive, as he went abroad and has not been heard of these four years, and I was the next, and oh, what a wretch have I been!

[She is again too much overcome to continue her story; after she recovers, she is addressed by]

Mr. Worthy. Mrs. Chipman, you may depend upon it, you are conversing with your real friends and best advisers. (*Mr. Lovegood adjoins*)—Yes; and with such friends also as rejoice over you in the depth of all your sorrows; trusting in God, that you are now blessed with repentance unto life.—But continue your story.

Chipm. After my birth, it was near seven years before my mother had another living child; but her constitution having been broken by different miscarriages, she did not long survive the birth of my sister. Before I was seduced, by that man who has left me to curse my folly, it was my greatest consolation to alleviate my father's sorrows, and to be my husband's joy. And, when but a child, I could, in those days, with the greatest tenderness, wait on my dear mo-

ther till I closed her eyes in death; and, if all the world had told me, that I should have been such a monster of iniquity I could not have believed them!

Loveg. Yes; but then you did not know the deceitfulness and wickedness of your sinful heart: you had nothing proposed to you, which was calculated to draw forth its evil propensities into action.

Chipm. No; nor for some time afterwards could I have believed that I should have turned out so vile a creature. Though so young as I then was, I cannot tell how much I was affected at my mother's death; and how I wept while I followed her to the grave; and afterwards how glad I was to wait on my dear father, who would never marry again because his family was already too large; and what diligence did I then show, though so young, to my poor brother and my sickly sister!

Wor. And what became of your sickly sister?

Chipm. Sir, from her birth she continued in an ill state of health; grew quite deformed; and, when she was about thirteen years of age, died of a decline. I followed her to the grave, and saw her laid upon my mother's coffin, who had been buried about twelve years before.—Surely I am the most abominable wretch that ever lived upon the earth.

Wor. But we wait to hear more of your story: especially that part of it whereby you were led into your present unhappy situation of distress.

Chipm. Oh, sir, the nearer I come to that part of my most vile conduct, the more I feel myself ashamed to relate it.

Loveg. But the more you are ashamed of your conduct, the better we shall be inclined to assist and relieve you. Tell us the whole without reserve.

Chipm. Sir, there lived a young man in our town, whose name was Chipman, he was an early scholar of my father, and from his attention and good disposi-

tion, he much esteemed him. He was by occupation a carpenter and joiner, and having an opportunity to do some business for himself, he again returned to my father for some farther instructions in drawing and arithmetic. It was from that time a connexion was formed between us. After he was somewhat established in business, he mentioned to my father his attachments and inclinations towards me; and I also was happy to confess my real affection towards him.—O, how it cuts my heart to tell, how my dear father acted on this occasion! He called me his dearest right hand; I was his dear Jemima, the name he gave me; his only earthly comforter, after all his most severe family afflictions; but, however ill he could spare me from his family, yet, as he had no fortune to give me, he would not prevent so good an offer for my future settlement in life; as Mr. Chipman was a very sober and industrious man, and advancing in a good line of business. Soon afterwards we were married. [*She again weeps and then adds,*] and I shall never, never forget when my dear father gave me away at the church, after the service, how he embraced and kissed me; then, how he embraced me and my husband both together, entreating him to be tender and affectionate to the best of daughters, and me to be obedient and loving to the very worthy man that was now become my husband!

Wor. By what you have hitherto related, if some parts of your conduct may have been highly culpable, yet we rather feel for you as an object of commiseration than of contempt. But when you have given us a farther narration of those circumstances, which have brought you into this present state of embarrassment, we shall be better able to give you our advice.

Chipm. O, sir, there never lived a happier pair

than Mr. Chipman and I were. For above eighteen months after our marriage, it seemed to be our whole study to please and oblige each other, and when I became pregnant, he was doubly attentive to make me the happiest woman upon earth; and how have I rewarded him by my brutal conduct! I have done enough to send the best of husbands with a broken heart to the grave. [*Again her grief is excessive.*]

Loveg. Let not these exclamations against yourself interrupt your story; we serve the God of patience, and with much patience and forbearance we wish to hear you farther.

Chipm. About a year and a half after our marriage, that artful vile man, Sir Charles Dash, who has an estate in our parts, though he seldom lives there, began to lay his plans for my ruin. In the midst of his filthy and frothy conversation, I too often gave him a smile when I should have treated him with disgust; though for awhile I treated all other familiarities with the abhorrence they deserved. Mr. Chipman, my husband, now began to get into a considerable way of business in the building line; and was frequently called, at a distance from home, to undertake the alterations and repairs of gentlemen's houses in the neighbourhood; and, for awhile, I could count the hours with anxiety until his return; until I had the folly to suffer that vile wretch to entangle me in his affections, who took every opportunity to accomplish my ruin, through my husband's necessary long absence from home.

Wor. But this accidental circumstance must be considered as an alleviation of your crime.

Chipm. O no, sir, for I should have been disgusted at every word he said; and, while I continued for a season to resist his vile designs, he would laugh at my prudish formality, and ask me, how I could confine myself to be the drudge of a carpenter, when I

had sufficient charms to manage the person and fortune of the first man of pleasure in the land? (*To Mr. Lovegood.*) O, sir, had I been possessed of the real influence of that religion, which, since then, I have heard you preach, the empty flattery of this vile seducer would never have been my ruin.

Loveg. Had you, then, no religious impressions to guard your heart against the horrid purposes of this artful man?

Chipm. O, sir, I am sorry to say, they were so faint, that I knew not how, either to answer his flatteries or resist his importunities; while on every occasion he would treat the religion of the Bible with the utmost ridicule and contempt.

Loveg. Then, to the eternal reproach of infidelity, it seems, he ever declared himself to be one of that stamp; and knew that he could never accomplish his vile designs to ruin you and the peace of your family, until he could persuade you that the pure holy religion of the Bible was not worth your minding.*

* The reading of Sir Charles was entirely limited to the writings of the modern infidels of the day; from them he had collected the following passages, which he would quote with an air of impious triumph: "The God of the philosophers, of the Jews, and the Christians, is nothing more than a chimera and a phantom." He was *fool* enough to conceive, from another Atheist, that "the wonders of nature are far from proclaiming a God, and that they are but the necessary effects of matter prodigiously diversified;" so that according to these *fools*, there is infinite wisdom, contrivance, and order in dead matter. In the midst of all his wickedness he would say, "there is no means of knowing, whether there be a God or not? whether there be any difference between good and evil?" and, if God be the author of evil according to Dr. Priestley, Sir Charles's notions are nearly right; and a Socinian and an Atheist are no very distant relations. And Sir Charles was so near a brute, he could not bear the thoughts of life without his body; he would therefore say, that "the immortality of the soul was a dogma of barbarians, gloomy and disheartening." The only two books on divinity, therefore, he ever read or ad-

Chipm. Sir, he was ever telling me, that the injunctions of a strict adherence to the marriage contract, was nothing but an artful design of the priests, and calculated only to restrain our natural passions, which all had a right to indulge as they chose best.

Loveg. And could you give credit to all this abominable and beastly talk?

Chipm. Credit to such talk!—O, no, sir; but infatuated by his enchanting promises, and by the splendour of his appearance in life, my ruin was accomplished.—What could possess me to be so beastly and so vile? (*She weeps excessively.*)

Wor. (*To Mr. Lovegood.*) As this unhappy young woman has told us the substance of her story, it appears to me, that, notwithstanding her indiscretion in an unguarded hour, it is not impracticable to restore her to her former connexions, and to render her future life a comfort to herself.

Chipm. Sir, it is utterly impossible.

Wor. Why should you say so?

Chipm. I shall be eternally ashamed again to enter a town, in which I must live the contempt, the abhorrence, and the disgrace of all who knew me.

mired, were, Priestley on Necessity, and on Matter and Spirit: the latter book brought things so nearly to his own mind, that there was no existence but that which is material; that he found one step farther, a denial of the doctrine of the resurrection would bring them to the same point; that “death is an eternal sleep.” He was highly pleased with the philosophy which taught, that “virtue and probity in private life is but the habit of actions personally useful;” and he was charmed beyond any thing at the sentiments of Volney, that “personal interest is the only and universal criterion of the merit of human actions;” and as to all chastity, as it respects the marriage contract, he would say, that “modesty in the female sex was but refined voluptuousness, and morals have nothing to fear from the generous passion of love.” Such were the adopted sentiments of Sir Charles; no wonder that a man of his vile principles was so vile in every part of his conversation.

Wor. Yes; but when they see you an humble penitent, the compassions of the people will be excited, and the reproach cast upon your character will, by degrees, wear off.

Chipm. O, sir, the cruel way in which I treated that worthy man, to whom I was united, after I became connected with Sir Charles, must for ever have done away all his former friendship and love towards me; and then the scandalous manner in which we were, in a measure, driven out of the town, and the disgraceful uproar made throughout the neighbourhood by my vile conduct, shame entirely forbids me to relate. O, sir, I am completely ruined, and must for ever be abhorred by all that ever knew me! But if, by taking in needle work, keeping a school, or by going out to any sort of labour, I can but earn myself a morsel of bread, for I was always used to an active life, I shall most thankfully and willingly submit to it.

Wor. What, then, do you think it would be of no avail, if your father should be written to, informing him, that your connexion with Sir Charles is now at an end? and might he not be a successful advocate with your husband, when he is given to understand, how grieved you are at your past conduct towards him?

Chipm. I can have no objection, that my dear father and husband should be informed how much ashamed I am of my most vile and base conduct towards them. (*To Mr. Lovegood.*) But, dear sir, if I might, I had rather live on bread and water where I am, than again grieve my dear father and husband by my return; or be removed at a distance from your ministry, by which, through the mercy of God, I have been reclaimed from my most abominable ways!

Wor. Perhaps it will be an encouragement to our worthy minister, if you tell us how your mind was first impressed when you came to Brookfield church?

Chipm. Sir, I am ashamed to acknowledge, that it

was very little more than mere curiosity which first induced me and Sir Charles to come to church; for, I confess, that public worship had, before then, been too much neglected by me; and entirely so when I became connected with Sir Charles.

Loveg. I am afraid, then, that a neglect of public worship was one of the causes of your present misfortunes.

Chipm. No, sir, when I lived with my father, and even for some time after our marriage, we attended public worship, if not constantly, yet more regularly than most of our neighbours; but, with us, public worship had been brought into very general neglect, for we knew nothing of our non-resident rector, but as he came upon the business of his tithes; and as for his curate, he was much more noticed as being the best sportsman and the cleverest dancer, than for the conscientious discharge of the duties of his office.—O, sir, had we been blessed with such a minister as I have found in you, I humbly trust, I should not have been given over to such a wicked course!

Wor. I confess, as you sat at no great distance from our pew, I saw you considerably affected, while Sir Charles appeared not a little irritated and displeased.

Chipm. O, sir, when I first came into Brookfield church, I was immediately struck with solemn surprise.—It appeared to me, as though I had never been at church before. With us, going to church was nothing but a matter of form, and the few who attended seemed to have little more to do than to settle the visits for the week; but, as to real devotion, I confess, I never knew what it meant, until I came into your church. O! sir, how was I struck to see a country village attended as on a fair day, by people from every quarter, all occupying their accustomed seats, with so much devotion, decency, and order; and, how I was farther struck, when you and your large

family, and that dear worthy man of God and his family, followed to complete the most devout and serious congregation I ever beheld with my eyes.

Wor. But, during the time of divine service, what part of it proved the most impressive upon your mind?

Chipm. O, sir, when that awful sentence from the second lesson was read against me, with so much solemnity, "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge;"—what I then felt I cannot express; and it is impossible to tell with what an indignant and contemptuous sneer I was treated by Sir Charles, immediately as he perceived my confusion and remorse.

Wor. No wonder, that a man of his vile character should treat you as he did, under such circumstances. But was there nothing in the sermon that particularly impressed your mind? for, I think, on that Sunday, our minister, though not knowing your character, was most providentially led to the choice of a text which was remarkably striking, as being so immediately applicable to your unhappy situation. I think the words were these: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet I will not forget thee."

Chipm. Sir, immediately as the text was mentioned, I was so remarkably struck, that, for awhile, in the midst of my confusion, all my recollection failed me; and as soon as I was a little recovered, I heard Sir Charles muttering in my ear the most cruel taunts and blasphemous invectives, for my weakness and superstition, as he called it. (*To Mr. Lovegood.*) But, O sir, was it possible for me not to feel, hard-hearted wretch as I have been, when you gave such a character of the monster who could forsake her sucking child, and when that very monster was then before you. (*Mrs. Chipman weeps.*)

Loveg. We esteem all your tears and sorrows as a matter of thankfulness before God: while we trust, what you are now led to feel of the evil and bitter consequences of sin, will prove to your eternal good. But, if Sir Charles behaved so cruelly towards you, even when in the church, I should suppose, when you retired home to your lodgings, his conduct must have been more abundantly cruel and severe.

Chipm. O, sir, it is impossible I could meet with more than I deserved: it was fit that I should reap the fruits of my own misconduct. How could I expect to be served better by him, when I consider how I had served my husband, my babe, my father, and my God! But, after we left the church, he first began more in the way of flattery than abuse; wondering that I was not more upon my guard than to be overcome, as he called it, by the cant of a whining and an artful priest: and that, though I had been exposing him and myself, by suffering my passions to be overcome, by my superstitious reverence for religion, yet that he was still inclined to make me a happy woman, provided I would but follow the dictates of *reason* and *nature*, which allowed and directed every one to be happy in the way that *they liked best*. O, sir, I am ashamed farther to tell you with what blasphemous contempt he spoke against the Christian religion; and, with what ridicule your character was treated by him, on account of those faithful admonitions which brought home to my heart a conviction of my evil ways.

Loveg. But, I suppose, he soon discontinued his flattery, when he perceived that it was of no avail?

Chipm. Sir, I was so affected, that I fell down upon my knees; beseeching him to show compassion to a ruined and most afflicted wretch, who dared not any longer continue a conduct so disgraceful and abominable before God and man. Directly he spurned me

from him; swore at me in the profanest manner; treated me in terms the most vulgar and cruel; then called for the servant that waited on us, crying, "See what this religion has done for this superstitious fool: I shall go and take lodgings for three days at Mapleton, and if in that time, she gets rid of her *religious qualms*, she may write a line and send it up to the George; but, if not, I shall leave her to her own superstitious folly: such *whining hypocrites* will never do for me."

Loveg. After this, I suppose you saw nothing of Sir Charles?

Chipm. Yes, sir, he came the third day down to our lodgings, and at the sight of him I quite fainted away; and thus he has left me the most disconsolate creature that ever lived on the earth.

Wor. Well, at all events, your father shall be written to; it will be highly proper that the good man should know of these circumstances. (*To Mr. Lovegood.*) Will you undertake the office?

Loveg. With all my heart, sir, as I do not know that the young woman can give us any farther information. With your leave, I will retire and write directly, and bring it to your house to-morrow, to see if it meets with your approbation.

Wor. Well, sir, then I will walk home and expect to see you to-morrow morning. (*To Edward.*) But, Edward, you must not let this poor unfortunate creature want; I shall be answerable for all expenses until these matters are settled.

Edw. Poor thing! she does not put us to much expense: the grief of mind she suffers, almost prevents her from taking any food. If your honour pleases, I shall be very glad to give her all she wants.

Chipm. O, what tenderness to such a wretch! this is Christianity indeed! O, that I had known more of such Christianity before I had known that wretched man!

Wor. But, Mr. Lovegood, on an occasion like this, I suppose you will not let us part without offering up a prayer.

[Mr. Lovegood immediately acquiesces, and the following prayer is offered up:

MR. LOVEGOOD'S PRAYER.

O thou God of infinite compassion! we, thy most vile and sinful creatures, approach the throne of thy grace, trusting alone in that mercy of thine, procured even for the chief of sinners, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus our Lord! We have all sinned against heaven and before thee; and, instead of being worthy to be numbered among thy children, we humbly acknowledge how justly we might have been given over to suffer the penalties of eternal death: but blessed be God that we have been brought upon our knees in thy sight, that each may cry for himself, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" Yea, and blessed, for ever blessed be God, that we are seeking mercy through his atonement, who is "able to save, to the uttermost, them that come to God through him!" And O, most holy Redeemer, thou hast "loved us and given thyself for us;" thy most precious blood is of infinite value for our redemption! thou hast "put away sin by the sacrifice of thyself!" and, thou hast given us the word of thy promise, that "whosoever cometh unto thee, thou wilt in no wise cast out:" and, now with weeping eyes and broken hearts, we humbly cry, Save, O Lord, save us for thy mercies' sake. And in an especial manner behold the poor contrite sinner before thee; till now ignorant of thee; ignorant of the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of her own heart! We lament, how awfully she has been seduced, and misled by the vile treachery of others, and by the corruptions of her own nature. But, lo! the poor penitent now humbles

herself before thee, and cries, "Behold, I am vile!" And while she thus repents and abhors herself in dust and ashes, as in thy sight, O, thou most tender witness of the weepings and wailings of her broken and contrite spirit, fulfil thy promise; let thy free forgiving love be her portion, and mercifully prevent her from being overwhelmed by the miseries and sorrows of her own mind! Heal the deep wounds which have been made on her heart, by the hateful and deceitful consequences of sin! restore her by thy blessed Spirit; imprint thy dear image upon her, and bid her go and sin no more. Let thy most merciful pity be vouchsafed to her disconsolate husband and afflicted parent! O that her unhappy departure from thee, might be made the providential event in thy wise hands, of bringing them near to thy blessed self; that all of them, being united to thee, may feel the restoration of that endearing union towards each other, which is the happy privilege of all those who have been blessed with thy love, and tasted of thy salvation. Grant this, most merciful Father, alone for thy Son's sake, our most gracious Mediator, and compassionate Redeemer.]

[After this prayer, Mrs. Chipman being very much affected, departed with Edward to the Golden Lion; Mr. Lovegood retired to his study to write to Mr. Reader, and Mr. Worthy went home to Brookfield Hall.]

DIALOGUE XVII.

MR. WORTHY AND MR. LOVEGOOD.

THE STORY OF MRS. CHIPMAN CONTINUED.

THE day following Mr. Lovegood waited on Mr. Worthy with the letter designed for Mr. Reader; this, having met with his approbation, was immediately sent by the post to the disconsolate parent of the unhappy Mrs. Chipman. A copy of which I have next to present the reader.

“SIR,

“Though I truly sympathize with you in the loss you must have sustained, by the unhappy elopement of your daughter from her husband; yet, I can bless our most merciful God, that I have it in my power to relate to you a circumstance which, I trust, will be a considerable alleviation of your distress. Sir Charles Dash, the gentleman by whom your daughter was most cruelly seduced, thought proper to rest a few days in the pleasant vale, in which our village is situated, in his way to Newmarket. During his stay here, I fear no better principle than mere curiosity led him to the church. In the progress of my duty, being minister of the parish, that chapter was read in which are these words, “Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge;” and, in the course of my sermon, without knowing any thing of the characters who attended, I made some observations, which have been so impressed upon her mind, as to produce, I humbly trust, that “repentance which will never be repented of.” After being thus con-

vinced of her evil conduct, she presently became the object of perfect hatred to the man by whom she had been so treacherously misled; and he has now most unmercifully left her a stranger, in a strange country, without a shilling for her subsistence: such have been the effects of his brutal love, and such the unhappy state to which your daughter has been reduced thereby. One alleviation, however, of her sufferings is, that she is in the hands of those, who, having obtained mercy from God our Saviour themselves, love to manifest the same to others. A most respectable gentleman, of an ample fortune and a liberal mind, has, for the present, engaged to supply her wants, and has employed me to enter into this correspondence with you, that we may know how far it will be practicable again to restore her to her family connexions. She has already communicated to us the principal circumstance of her former situation in life; and, while justice demands it of me, I am happy to observe, that it is impossible for any one to discover greater tenderness of mind or deeper contrition of spirit. She cannot speak of you, dear sir, but a flood of tears immediately bursts from her eyes, while she execrates her vile ingratitude to the best of parents, and a parent also, whose family afflictions have been so severe. The like character she also gives of her affectionate and attentive husband, and has not language to express how she abhors herself for grieving the heart of one so worthy of her affections, for the sake of another in every point of view so worthless and so vile. Being myself both a husband and a father, I know what I must have felt, had it been my unhappy lot to have met with such an afflictive dispensation in my family; it is, therefore, with the greater tenderness, that I can sympathize with you. But, dear sir, may I hope and trust, that it will not be in vain to request

you to bestow forgiveness on your once most obedient, though afterwards ungrateful, yet now, truly penitent and afflicted daughter; whose heart is so severely broken, that it truly breaks our hearts to behold her daily and nightly grief: and, indeed, she is so completely overwhelmed with shame and remorse for her sins, before God and man, that it is a question with us, if she can long survive the sorrows of her own mind. For the sake, therefore, of that blessed Saviour, whose mercies are so free to the vilest of our penitent race, pass by those unguarded hours of your daughter's life; let the principal blame rest upon the head of the vile seducer, and restore to your recollection what she was in her chaster days, when it was the joy of her heart to show the most filial obedience, and affectionate attention to a parent she still so dearly loves, and so highly reveres. I confess, I find it is to me a much greater difficulty to decide, how far it becomes me to be her advocate with her husband as well as with her father. She confesses the bond of her marriage connexion is dissolved; and she humbly acknowledges, that were she doomed to spend the residue of her days in a state of the most pensive widowhood, it would be the least punishment she deserves; nor can she ever suppose herself again worthy to embrace her dear child, which she unnaturally left when it still needed the fostering care of a mother's arms.

“Under these considerations I determined, that it might be the most prudent step not to correspond with her husband, but with her father, on this most unhappy event; and to leave you to converse with your son-in-law, and then to transmit your answer to this address. I have already mentioned, that almost every circumstance, relative to this unhappy affair, has been communicated to us by her; but an event, about a public disturbance, which, she says,

originated in her misconduct, and, on account of which, she conceives she will be for ever forbidden to make her appearance any more in your neighbourhood, she has not fully explained. If you think it proper, confidentially, to relate the particulars of that event, you may depend upon it, the only advantage I shall take of it will be to exert myself still farther to assist and console, by every effort in my power, a poor unfortunate young woman, originally dear to you, by the purity and simplicity of her affectionate obedience, and now not less dear to me, as an humble penitent won to God our Saviour by the ministry of

“Your unknown friend,
and servant, for Christ’s sake,
BENJAMIN LOVEGOOD.”

*Lower Brookfield,
near Mapleton.*

About a fortnight after the above letter was sent, Mr. Reader returned the following answer:

“REV. SIR,

“I conceive myself unutterably obliged to you, for your very great kindness and attention manifested towards my unfortunate daughter. No doubt, but you find yourself sufficiently repaid by the approbation of your own mind, for the great goodness you have testified on this occasion, while you have still to look forward to a future day, in which you will receive a full reward at the hands of the Almighty for that uprightness of heart you have manifested towards one, that I thought might have been sufficiently guarded from such evils, by the virtuous principles, which, from her childhood, I conceived it my duty to impress upon her mind. Amidst the deep grief I have sustained at the revolt of my dear child, from the paths of virtue and morality, I

am happy she is now convinced of her error; and sincerely pray, that she may abide by the good resolutions she has been able to re-assume. I at once submit, kind sir, to the requisition you make on my daughter's behalf. Assure her, therefore, that I freely forgive her, and shall again receive her, without the most distant token of my displeasure, as I trust her repentance has proved a sufficient *atonement* for her crimes: and, indeed, her former good conduct, before she was seduced by that wicked man, ever gave me such evident demonstration of the *natural goodness of her heart*, that it were highly uncharitable, not to suppose that her repentance is sincere; these unhappy days of her folly and indiscretion, I shall therefore bury in eternal oblivion. Assure her, therefore, I shall be much grieved and affected, if the unhappy *fracas*, which, she says, she is ashamed to relate, should prevent her from accepting this, my affectionate invitation for her return; and, as you wish to understand that circumstance, I am free to relate it. My worthy son-in-law, a man of most excellent natural inclinations, who had unfortunately too much proof of the evil propensities of my daughter, from her uncivil and unkind behaviour, by first thwarting him upon all occasions, and then embracing every opportunity to receive the addresses of Sir Charles, had soon too much reason to suspect his vile intent. He therefore for once feigned a necessary absence from home on his business, and returned at an unexpected hour. By this stratagem, he detected that wicked man in his abominable designs: and not having sufficient property to avenge himself in course of law, can you wonder, sir, if Mr. Chipman should have exceeded the rules of moderation in the revenge he was excited to take against the man, from whom he had received such cruel injuries? Armed with horse-whips, he and one of his

men, by force entered the chamber, where they discovered my daughter and this libidinous wretch: thus armed, they gave him one of the severest flagellations man could well receive. But could it be severer than such a brutal and treacherous conduct deserved at his hands? Being thus driven out of the house, he was followed with no less severity through the town. He was thrown into the kennel by a mob of children in the streets, while the people at large eagerly testified their approbation of Mr. Chipman's method, if not of legal, yet of laudable revenge, in their general outcry against a man so deservedly detested, as the destroyer of the peace of one of the most happy families in the town. At length, however, Sir Charles, with great difficulty got to his lodgings; soon afterwards he was followed thither by my daughter; they both made an early elopement together the next morning, and, after that, what became of them was a matter entirely unknown to us until your letter was received.

"As, with much delicacy, you ask my advice, how far it may be practicable to attempt a reconciliation between my daughter and her husband; so I find as much difficulty in giving my advice. You say, my daughter is so true a penitent, and is now so deeply affected at her past offences, that you have your fears, whether she can survive her grief; and it much concerns me to observe, that the revival of her affection to her husband, must be attended with additional grief to her mind, when she is informed, that Mr. Chipman has been so deeply affected at this unhappy event, that he sunk under melancholy and dejection of spirit. This brought on a bilious fever, which, for several days, we thought would have terminated in his death: and, though he is recovered from the most dangerous crisis of the disease, yet, I fear, the effects of it he will not long survive.

He has no spirits left; his business he totally neglects; and, whenever he thinks of my daughter, or beholds the dear little infant she has cruelly left behind, he is again overwhelmed with grief and floods of tears; and though I and Mr. Fribble, the curate of our town, do all we can to divert him by reading the news, or by an innocent game at cards, I fear, that detestable seducer will be the death of one who, I believe, was naturally as *good-hearted* as most that are to be met with in the present day.

"Think, kind sir, what a painful task it was to me, to read your letter to my son-in-law, in a state so debilitated and weak; and, though I did it with all possible tenderness and attention to his feeling mind, yet it opened the sluices of his affection beyond what I can possibly express, and it was with much difficulty, that at length, he cried, 'Tell my wife, I freely forgive her; but, though a dying man, how can I forgive the wretch, who has destroyed the peace of my mind, and torn my darling from my bosom!'

"I leave it with you, sir, to break these painful circumstances to my unfortunate daughter as you may judge best. So far as her conduct has been a grief and injury to me, again I repeat it, I freely forgive her from the bottom of my heart; but, from the declining state of her husband's health, I have deferred writing for above a week. I fear he will soon forget all his sorrows, in being speedily laid in the silent grave. He is, however, a man naturally of a very good mind, and is now endeavouring to fortify himself against that solemn event, by *making his peace with God*, according to the best of his ability and knowledge. I am, Rev. Sir, with many thanks, for your great kindness and attention to my daughter,

"Your most obedient humble servant,

Locksbury, May 15.

JAMES READER."

Immediately upon the reception of the above letter, Mr. Lovegood consulted Mr. Worthy how they had best act upon it. They not only had to lament the strange dark conceptions of Mr. Reader's mind, as it respected his knowledge of the Gospel, though in himself a well-intentioned man, but were very apprehensive of the effects it must have on Mrs. Chipman's feelings. They were both, however, of the same judgment, that the contents of the letter could not be kept back from her, whatever painful sensations might be created thereby.

They conceived also that a second interview similar to the former, would be more painful to her feelings, under this new circumstance of the dying situation of her husband. It was at length judged best that Mr. Lovegood should send her father's letter, for private perusal, together with another letter from himself, preparing her for its trying contents. This he wrote with much tenderness and discretion, begging her to prepare her mind, by prayer and resignation to God, to say on this event, "Thy will be done."

Edward was accordingly sent for and directed how to act, and afterwards to inform Mr. Lovegood and Mr. Worthy of the result. Edward wishing to have some one else in his house, on this occasion, requested Henry Littleworth would be there; who, though once such a profane and dissipated rake, was now the admiration of the neighbourhood, for the wisdom, and goodness, and purity of his life. He, with his sister Nancy, came down, therefore, from Gracehill Farm, that they might be there while Mr. Reader's letter was laid before his daughter: and, as the case of Mrs. Chipman was in some measure his own, he would naturally enter into her feelings with much tenderness and sympathy of mind. The consequences of this interview will now

be presented to the reader, in the conversation which took place at Mr. Lovegood's, where Henry and Edward went to report the result of this event.

Edw. Sir, Mr. Henry Littleworth and I are come to tell you how Mrs. Chipman received the letter.

Loveg. Well, and how did the poor creature bear it?

Edw. Why, sir, at first, as you directed me, I gave her your letter. While she attempted to read it she wiped her eyes several times, admiring your tenderness to such a wretch, as she always calls herself. She then said, By the latter end of Mr. Lovegood's letter, I find you have another letter from my father; and, when I gave it her, she trembled like an aspen leaf. I then begged her to go up stairs and read it by herself. She had not been long there, before we heard her scream violently; my wife and I ran up, and found her in strong hysterics.

Loveg. I was afraid the letter would be too much for her. Her affections having been withdrawn from the *worthless fellow* who seduced her, since the blessed change, which, I trust, has really taken place upon her mind, it is no wonder, that they are strongly restored to their proper object: and the thoughts of his death by her misconduct, I know must be like a dagger to her heart.—But how long did she continue in that state?

Edw. I believe, sir, it was full half an hour. We desired Mr. Henry and his sister would walk up, while my wife went down to bring something for her refreshment, and when she seemed a little recovered, Mr. Henry went to prayer with her.

Loveg. (*To Henry.*) Well, and how did her mind seem after prayer?

Hen. O, sir, she sat the picture of misery and grief; calling herself, monster, murderer, wretch, and the vilest sinner out of hell. Then I began to tell her, that she could not be worse than I was in my thoughtless days; but there was a precious word of promise given for me and for her: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief." "No," she directly cried, "I am chief, and I shall have the murder of my dear husband soon to answer for before the bar of God. O, how I abhor myself, how ashamed am I of this most polluted soul, and, if possible, still more polluted body before God." Thus she went on exclaiming against herself. O, sir, what misery and mischief has sin brought into the world, and what a mercy, that God ever stopped me in my mad ways!

Loveg. Yes, Mr. Henry, none of us can be sufficiently thankful for the power of that divine grace, which saves from a thousand evils. But could you discover from Mrs. Chipman's conversation, what were her future designs?

Edw. Sir, she could hold no conversation with us whatever. I am afraid she will lose her senses, or her life.

Loveg. Let us hope for the best, Edward. We cannot be surprised at the strength of her feelings on receiving such tidings respecting her poor husband; the grace of God always restores tenderness to the mind. But this, for the present, makes it a more melancholy event; as almost whatsoever is said to her, can have no other tendency than to add to her grief; and, how to advise her, as to the steps she should take under present circumstances, is a most difficult task. Were she to accept of her father's invitation and return home, the sight of her dying husband might be the cause of her death also; for thousands of people have been killed by grief.

Hen. O, sir, when it first pleased God to awaken me to a sense of my sins, nothing so affected me as the thought, that my vile conduct might have sent my dear parents with broken hearts to the grave.

Edw. But, sir, if you could come to our house, and say something, by way of comforting the poor creature, we should esteem it a great kindness. We really do not know what to do with her, and she pays great attention to what you say. Till the letter came, about her husband's illness, she began now and then to look a little cheerful; she took a deal of notice of what you said yesterday was se'nnight in your sermon, *as how* God could overrule the wicked purposes of mankind to bring about the eternal good of themselves and others: though sin was not the less abominable on that account. I dare say, sir, you remember what you said about Onesimus, who was permitted to rob and then run away from his master, that he might be brought to the knowledge of the truth. She seemed to take a deal of notice of that observation.

Loveg. Well, Edward, if it be your wish, I shall have no objection. I have an hour to spare, and will go with you directly.

[Mr. Lovegood, Henry, and Edward, walk to the Golden Lion. On the road Edward observes:]

Edw. Sir, I believe, I must lay aside public-house keeping. My wife and I think out of our little farm, (you know our squire is very moderate in his rents,) and by making a little malt, we can keep ourselves very well, especially since we buried our last poor little girl; we have but three children now left.

Loveg. O no, Edward, by no means; for, as soon as you give over, some one else will be starting up, especially as the turnpike road lies through our village, and then it is probable, that nothing but riot and drunkenness will be brought into our parish, and one public-house is quite enough for this place,

Edw. Why, sir, did you not hear, what a riot we were likely to have had at our house, last Tuesday evening, from a set of drovers that came along this way?

Loveg. No, not I.—I never hear of riots at your house.

Edw. Why, sir, after I had put their beasts into the field, they came into the house, and began cursing and swearing; and as I thought it might answer best to speak to them with as much good temper as I could, as generally that goes farthest with such sort of people, I told them, that ours was a very regular house; and that for the sake of good order, I thought it best, that we should all swear by turns, and that it was my turn to swear next: and thus we should all prove, one by one, where was the good of it, and what advantage comes by it; therefore, for the sake of good manners, I begged they would stop till after they had heard me swear. One of them having cast his eyes on what I had painted in large letters over the mantel-piece, SWEAR NOT AT ALL, directly said, with a great oath, that he should burst if he was kept from swearing at that rate. I then told them, I would do any thing in reason to oblige them, if they would but oblige me; and that made them quiet for awhile.

Loveg. Well, if that was the case, your end was answered, and who knows what may be the future good effects of such a testimony against their profane conversation.

Edw. But, sir, it did not end here; for, it seems, they had been laying wagers as they came along the road, and they had engaged to spend it in drink before they went to bed; and when I told them they could have no more liquor in my house than what was really good for them; for I had not suffered a person to get drunk within my doors for

above these seven years; immediately they began cursing and swearing at me, and abusing my d—d religion, as they called it, in the most outrageous manner. I directly told them, if they did not behave quietly I should go to the gentleman, who was my landlord and a justice of peace, and who would allow none of these doings in our village, and that he would make them pay for every oath they swore. They then began to be so noisy, that I thought I actually should be obliged to send to the 'squire for a warrant; but, at last, after I had promised them a pint of beer before supper, and two pints after supper, as it had been a very hot day, provided they did not swear over it, they became pretty orderly, and one of them suffered me to talk to him very seriously; and I gave him some of the religious tracts our 'squire wished me to put into the hands of travellers who come our road.

Loveg. This is no proof that you should give up your public house; but just the contrary; for had they gone but two miles farther, to Mapleton, there, I fear, they might have made themselves wicked enough; at least they were restrained for awhile; and now they have heard something they may remember another day. Besides, I am told, that a great many decent sober travellers have lately found their way to your house, for the sake of the quiet and orderly accommodations they find there; and where are the people to go to on a Sunday if you shut up your public house? I am persuaded you are as much in the way of duty in your public house as I am when in the pulpit; and I am sure, your excellent landlord, Mr. Worthy, is of the same opinion. He will never suffer you to pull down your Golden Lion, for a few rubs of this sort.

Edw. But, sir, had some of my sober customers

happened to have been there: how I should have been ashamed of myself!

Loveg. Ashamed of yourself—for what? I am sure, they would never have thought the worse of you, or religion, on that account; besides, I think I can give you a remedy for this evil, at a very small expense; wait a few days, and see if I cannot.

[The Golden Lion is a little snug clean place situated on the brook from whence the village takes its name; it had a nice old-fashioned porch before the door. Mr. Worthy immediately contrived a plan to adorn the brook with some weeping willows, and the front of this porch in a captivating tasty style, though consistent with its original simplicity, making it still more like a neat summer-house, by sending his gardener to plant some honey-suckles and flowering shrubs about the porch, and on the little green before the door. On a tablet on the front of the porch thus adorned, the following lines were soon afterwards painted:

Let the kind trav'ler of a friendly mind
Step in, and all he wants he here shall find;
A grateful welcome and a wholesome bed,
A peaceful pillow for a sober head.

While moderation makes the mild request,
He has whate'er he needs before his rest;
The hostess waits with an attentive hand,
To serve with cheerfulness at his command.

'Tis here the constant law of kindness reigns;
Her rightful sceptre here she well maintains;
No sons of midnight riot dare molest
The sweet repose the weary find in rest.

'Tis here tranquillity and peace combine,
To shed their grateful influence all divine;
Here Love has fix'd her constant fond abode
For all who love themselves, and love their God.

Thus adorned by the elegant taste of Mr. Worthy, and the poetic genius of Mr. Lovegood, stands the Golden Lion in the parish of Lower Brookfield, situate in a vale which exhibits the most enchanting scenery the eye of man can well behold. While it beautifully opens itself to the south, it is screened from the northern blast by a chain of rocky hills, the most magnificent and wild. Here the meandering stream, which afterwards runs through the village, and adorns the pleasure grounds of Brookfield-hall, finds its retired channel under a ridge of those rocks, which in many places project in fine bold perpendicular forms, and which being covered with an abundance of stately trees, the growth of ages, projecting forward in different points of view, exhibit to your imagination the ruins of such ancient castles, as might, in former ages, have filled the world with astonishment and surprise.

This part of the scenery has been in possession of the family of the Worthys for many generations. Other parts of the same landscape belonging to Lord Rakish are not less enchanting, if less romantic; all of them fine rising hills, beautifully broken and richly picturesque. Nearly on the summit of one of them stands the village of Upper Brookfield, while a variety of cottages are found to rest on different broken brows, adding a pleasing vivacity to the neighbourhood at large.

It is, however, to be lamented, that this part of the scenery has, in a measure, been deprived of a share of its original beauties: through the extravagance of Lord Rakish, created by a life of dissipation, many a fine wide-spreading oak has been felled to the ground. Not so the estates belonging to the family of the Worthys. Throughout several generations, every tree is sure to stand, but as it is cut down for necessary repairs, and its successors are provided for gene-

rations yet to come. Durable as the everlasting hills and mountains which surround them, may the family long survive, while it is of little consequence what becomes of the family of such worthless lords, whose boasted ancestors were, perhaps, only the sycophants of some corrupted court, and whose conduct is of no better tendency than to spread contagion in the vicinage wherein they live.

Which of my readers, whoever he may be, after such a description of the situation of the Golden Lion, and its honest occupier, will not thank me whenever he may travel that road, if I recommend him there to seek his necessary accommodations? There he will find a host truly pious; a hostess neatly industrious and attentive; a clean-scoured table, not covered with damask linen, but with a cloth delicately white; a plain, but plentiful repast, neatly served up; and every other accommodation at a reasonable rate, that any man of tranquillity and moderation, and blessed with the fear of God, would wish to enjoy. By this design at the entrance of the porch, no such unwelcome visitants, as before mentioned, now presume to interrupt the guests, nor is any thing farther heard after the door is closed at the evening of the day, but the still voice of reading the Bible and Family Prayer in a back parlour; while none of the customers are prohibited from enjoying the same privilege with the family, (if they request it,) which they enjoy among themselves. But the reader's attention shall no longer be interrupted from Mrs. Chipman's narrative. The conversation, started by Edward, was scarcely concluded when they reached the Golden Lion.]

Edw. (To his wife, called Prudence.) Well, Prudence, how is Mrs. Chipman?

Prud. I think, she seems a little more composed,

though she is very low. (*To Mr. Lovegood.*) Your servant, sir, she will be very glad to see you; she often talks about you.

Loveg. I should be happy to do her any service, poor thing, but her situation is so truly perplexing, that I know not how to deal with her; it appears to me as though her life almost depended on every word that is said to her. Is she up stairs?

Prud. If you please, sir, I'll call her down, as the house is free from company.

[She comes down, faint, trembling, and very hysterical.] After awhile, Mr. Lovegood takes her by the hand, and said, My friend, pray for submission and resignation to the will of God.

Chipm. O, sir, how can you call a *murderer* your friend?

Loveg. When you made that unhappy step, you by no means intentionally designed to be a murderer.

Chipm. But had I thought at all, what could I have expected otherwise? What a wretch have I been to break the heart of such a man; I deserve to be hated by all who know me.

Loveg. Yes; I admit that your thoughtless moments were the cause of all your present calamities: and then pride and passion, doubtless, prevailed, and rendered you inconsiderate: and no wonder that, when given over to such guides, that such consequences followed. But admitting the charge against yourself, even murderers are not beyond the reach of divine mercy. How justly might you have been given over to insensibility and hardness of heart; but now you are brought to your recollection, you feel your folly.

Chipm. Yes, sir, and a thousand times worse than folly. O, how it cuts my heart to think what my dear husband's feelings must have been before I could have brought him to such a state. What would I

give to restore him from the grave, if he should never love me any more! What shall I do; how shall I act? Dear sir; shall I go directly to him? If it were in my power to walk on foot, every step of the way, how gladly would I take the journey; if each step would but bring me nearer to heal the heart of that worthy man, who is now dying through my most vile and ungrateful conduct.

[She is again extremely affected, while all present join to mingle the tear of sympathetic grief with hers; then she adds:]

Chipm. But what is become of my dear child? I hear nothing of him, that innocent miserable orphan, that has, perhaps, by now lost its affectionate father, while it has been forsaken by its brutal mother!

Loveg. We have heard nothing as it respects the health or situation of your child; we trust it still lives, and that your mind will be so composed, as that you may live to bring it up in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Chipm. O, sir, your text, "Can a woman forget her sucking child!"

[She again gives way to excessive grief of mind; Mr. Lovegood catches an opportunity, during the intervals of her grief, to add]

Loveg. But should you not recollect, how God can bring good out of evil; God, we trust, has already accomplished in you the good of repentance, which was indirectly brought about through the horrid evil of seduction.

Chipm. [After some recollection, a little more calm.] Well, well, if ever I am saved, I shall be the greatest monument of mercy upon earth; but, if God forgives me, I never, never can forgive myself.

Loveg. There are as great monuments of grace already in glory.—Mary Magdalene, out of whom the Lord cast seven devils, Saul, and many others. Hope

for the best. I think, I see a plan of good before us, in all these calamities, which gives me reason to believe, that God will get himself more glory by your misguided steps, than might have been the case, had these events never taken place.

Chipm. O, sir, is it possible?

Loveg. Was ever any thing more glorious than what God accomplished, by permitting the base conduct of Herod, Pontius Pilate, and Judas Iscariot, to betray, and sell, and crucify our Lord?

Chipm. O, sir, but these were all wicked, and were punished for their wickedness. And shall I escape?

Loveg. Joseph's brethren, you know, meant evil against him; but God, notwithstanding, overruled it for good to save much people alive: so that, even their evil ways were permitted for their own future good: and you remember, how God brought about matters for the salvation of a thievish Onesimus. Who knows, but your father and your husband may be brought to the knowledge of the gospel, by the same unhappy steps, which, under the management of Divine Providence, have brought you to Brookfield?

Chipm. O, would to God it might! I think it is that event alone, which will prevent my dying of a broken heart.

Loveg. Well, I have a plan before me, that may, by the blessing of God, be the cause of as great joy to you as present circumstances have made you miserable. You know how unhappily ignorant your father is of the way of salvation, made known in the Bible by Jesus Christ. Poor man, he has no other confidence, but that of a heathen in his own morality: now I mean to send him a very serious letter upon this subject, and recommend him to read some such books as may lead him to the knowledge of the truth;

and, who knows what a blessing it may be to his soul!

Chipm. And, O, dear sir, do, for the Lord's sake, write upon the same subject to my dear husband: what good can he get from the visits of Mr. Fribble? Shall I go myself and beg his pardon, again and again, that he may forgive me before he dies, and explain to him the little that I know about the matter, since I have seen my folly, and been made to abhor my ways?

Loveg. I really think you had better leave all this to others. A meeting of that sort, under present circumstances, would be too much for you both. But are there no serious people about that neighbourhood?

Chipm. I remember there were a few people who used to meet in some back room, in a lane in our town, and as they were ridiculed, just as you are, I have already thought they might be good people; but then my father was very much prejudiced against them, and my husband was entirely guided by him in religion. O, dear sir, what would I give if my father and husband could but meet with some one who knows about that Christianity, which has wounded my heart, under a conviction of the evil nature of sin, and has made me to abhor myself for my most abominable conduct.

Hen. Sir, I feel so much interested on this subject, though I am so young in grace, yet I could almost venture to say, I would ask my father, if he could spare me to go with your letters and the books. I think Locksbury is not above seventy miles from Mapleton; I could get there in two days: and our harvest will not come on these six weeks.

Loveg. Why, Henry, could I leave my charge, I should be happy to go with you; but if you could be spared, such a visit might be attended with most

blessed consequences; and if your father has not a horse to spare, fit for the journey, I can almost answer for it, Mr. Worthy will be very happy to accommodate you with one, if your lameness should not prove an impediment.

Hen. I thank God my hip is much strengthened since I have returned home. I feel very little inconvenience when I ride. I will go home and consult my father, and then I will call on you again.

Soon after this the conversation terminated with a prayer from Mr. Lovegood. Henry went home to consult with his father about the journey. He was, with some difficulty, persuaded to part with his much beloved son, who was now made so dear to him by the uniting ties of the Gospel, while Mr. Lovegood attended to his engagement, to write a very serious and appropriate letter to Mr. Reader; and to select a few books, such as might be the most conducive to give him a proper view of the Gospel dispensation; and if the reader will but wait, till after Henry's return, he may probably hear of some farther events which were the result of this interesting visit. This dialogue, therefore, shall close by laying before the reader two letters; the one from Mr. Lovegood to Mr. Reader, the other from Mrs. Chipman to her dying husband.

“SIR,

“TO MR. READER.

“We all feel ourselves so deeply interested in your family afflictions as to excite us to show you every possible attention for the alleviation of your distress. By the peculiar wish of your daughter, and by the benevolent assistance of Mr. Worthy, a purpose messenger waits upon you with this, and with some other tokens of our sympathy and respect.

“Mr. Henry Littleworth, the young man who is so kind as to be our messenger on this occasion, though once unhappily of a profane and dissolute turn, is now, by the grace of God, become remarkably serious and devout. This makes him feel more tenderly for your daughter, as her case, in some respects, is so similar to his own. Since he has experienced the converting power of divine grace upon his heart, he has considerably cultivated a good understanding, by reading and serious meditation upon useful and profitable subjects. To him therefore, I shall refer you, for all you wish to know, as it respects your daughter’s mind; while, at the same time, I have no doubt, but that you will find him capable of advising with you, as it may respect what future steps should be taken, either upon the death or recovery of Mr. Chipman.

“But, dear sir, with the greatest tenderness, at least, as it relates to the feelings of my own mind, I wish to obviate those mistakes, in which you conceive so highly respecting any applause I can take to myself, or any meritorious claim I can ever make before the bar of a just and holy God. Surely, sir, it is beyond the power of an angel to give him more obedience than is due to his infinitely holy name; therefore even their perfect services appear before him, as having no meritorious claim, when all the ability must first be received from him, ere any service they perform can be deemed acceptable in his sight.

“Were Gabriel himself to presume to boast, and were the Lord to answer him, “Take that which is thine, and go thy way,” would he not sink into nothing before his God? No wonder, therefore, that while they are performing their highest acts of obedience, they are described as veiling their faces, and giving all the glory to Him, who has made

them what they are, and who still upholds them by the arm of his almighty power. If then the proud boast of merit be inconsistent even with Angels themselves, what should our language be, when sinners of our depraved race shall be called to stand in his holy presence, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, but with infinite detestation and eternal abhorrence?

“Not to depreciate that which may be praiseworthy in you, dear sir, or in any one else, as it respects our *outward* conduct between man and man; but surely as it relates to the *inward* state of our minds, before a Being of infinite purity, Who can stand when he appeareth? Never was one whose righteous character before man shone so bright as that of Job; but when his eye saw God, or in other words, when the eye of his mind saw into the nature of the infinite purity of God, with what solemn surprise does he cry, “Behold, I am vile!” And how humiliating was his language, as it farther respected himself: “Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” Not less surprised was the prophet Isaiah, when the Seraphims’ voices cried to each other, “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts!” Then said he, “Wo is me, for I am undone.” If the most holy and exalted of the saints of God thus humbled themselves in the dust before him; instead of our boasting of the *merit* of our righteousness, how much more have we cause to lie in the dust on account of the *demerit* of our sinfulness. If, therefore, you will allow me to speak plainly the feelings of my mind on this subject, whatever difference subsists between me and the vilest sinner upon earth, my language must ever be like that of St. Paul; “By the grace of God I am what I am:” while, amidst my highest acquirements, I feel myself a sinner still; and indeed in every attempt to serve

God, I am sensible I fall short of my duty, and of his glory. And though I may not have been guilty of the Publican's practice, yet sure I am, I need to adopt the Publican's prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

"Once, dear sir, these things were hid from my eyes; while I was ignorant of God I was ignorant of myself. But, when I began to read my Bible with attention, I soon discovered, it was God's own account of a very depraved and fallen race; and, that the sentence of a just and holy law had pronounced eternal death against all mankind, as "all had sinned;" and, that it was now in vain for me any longer to make the Pharisee's plea, "I thank thee, I am not as other men;" while I was foolishly "trusting in myself, that I was righteous, and despised others;" saying in the pride of my heart, "Stand by, for I am holier than thou."

"But what sinner can ever be said to be righteous? Not more absurd is it to say, the guilty are innocent. The law has positively said, "The soul that sinneth shall die;" that "the wages of sin is death;" yea, and that "if we offend in one point, we are guilty of all;" for it matters not in what point we transgress, as the sentence goes forth by pronouncing, "Cursed is every one that continueth not (during his whole life) in all things written in the book of the law to do them."

"Thus by the knowledge of the purity and holiness of the law, the proud notions of merit were soon banished far from my mind, and no other hope was left for me, but the hope of the Gospel; salvation for our ruined race, from his mercy alone, who came to "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." I am now satisfied, "that there is no other name given among men whereby they can be saved, but the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour." Thus,

sir, I had been living on the false hope of a mere heathen, and never knew it, till divine mercy convinced me of the purity of God's law, and the impurity of my own nature. While the name of Christ had been sounded in my ears, I had no conception of the need of his salvation in my heart; it was on my own goodness, not on his grace, that I fixed my dependence. But now I feel and know, He alone is my peace and salvation; and that without the shedding of his blood, I never can be redeemed from the curse of the law: so that, in point of my acceptance and justification before God, I have no other plea left, but his obedience unto death on my behalf. I confess myself a sinner; and while I abhor every comparative idea of merit above others of my fellow sinners, (for we have all sinned, and fallen short of his glory) I trust alone on his mercy for my salvation.

"I was not less ignorant of the nature of that holiness possessed by every true believer, who is thus accepted in the Beloved. I mistook decency for devotion, and morality before man for spirituality before God. Never till I knew the evil of sin as a transgression against God's good and holy law, did I desire to be delivered from its inward dominion and power. I now know "I must be born again," or in other words, "be renewed in the spirit of my mind:" and, of this I am persuaded, the pardoned believer has no inclination to live in sin, that grace may abound; for, he knows, that being justified by the redemption that is in Christ, he is dedicated unto God thereby, that he may live to his glory. I had not thus dwelt on my own experience so long, had I not conceived, that you also have been unhappily misled from the glorious hope of the Gospel, by the same mistake. I have, therefore, taken the liberty to transmit to you a few books upon the evangelical, yet not less prac-

tical truths of the Gospel; and, I am sure, most thoroughly consistent with the articles and liturgy of that church, of which I am happy to confess myself a minister, and of which also I suppose yourself to be a member.

“Though it grieves us all to see your daughter so excessively overcome by the dangerous state of Mr. Chipman’s health; it, notwithstanding, presents us with a most pleasing sensation, as it respects the tender and blessed state of mind, to which, by the grace of God, she seems most graciously to be restored.

“As the most worthy and excellent young man, the bearer of this, will take an opportunity of consulting with you, on what steps may be necessary to be taken on this unhappy event, I shall shorten this address by subscribing myself,

“Your real friend and servant for Christ’s sake,
“BEN. LOVEGOOD.”

Brookfield.

MRS. CHIPMAN’S LETTER.

“My Dearest Husband,

“If you can admit a wretch, so treacherous and vile, to address you in such terms, will you allow me to implore your pardon, in the most submissive language? Nothing but guilt and confusion fills my heart, exciting, at the same time, tears of the deepest contrition from my eyes; while I thus request you to forgive the worst of women, who has been so treacherous and cruel to the best of husbands; and, who has behaved so unnaturally, as to forsake her own offspring also. My most dear and injured husband, I could not have presumed on this address if I had not been taught by divine mercy, to abhor myself for my crimes; but, as I am now seeking forgiveness

of God, I feel I never can be happy until I am favoured with your forgiveness also. I am told, with inexpressible grief, by a letter from my father, that you are a dying man, through my most hateful conduct towards you. Is it possible for you to believe, after all that has passed, that I speak the truth when I say, I now feel, since a most merciful God has, I trust, changed my vile heart, a love to you stronger than ever I felt before? And, I could travel a thousand miles to heal your heart: the pleasure I should take in each painful step for such a purpose I cannot express. Yet, consider, I beseech you, your once dearest Jemima; and recollect how happy we were in the chaster days of our connexion; while I could keep your accounts, post your books, and wait upon you with the most affectionate attention. I cannot tell you how I execrate myself for having forsaken such an office, and for grieving the heart of such a husband. I beg you not, however, to suppose I mean hereby an excuse for my crimes; they cannot be lessened by any excuse whatever. Yet, I trust, having received that grace which makes me shudder at my former conduct, you will remember what once a poor Magdalen felt, when she washed our Saviour's feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. And, though I scarcely dare presume to hope that he will forgive a wretch that has been so vile; yet, let me humbly request you to consider, what that most affectionate young man has to say to you, who brings you this letter, and who was not, until a merciful God changed his heart, much less wicked and hateful than myself. O then, let it be believed, that nothing in a way of mercy is impossible with God; and, surely, that mercy is needed by us all, when we consider what sinful hearts we have before him! who is infinitely holy. Oh! how then shall such a wretch as I have been appear be-

fore him! My only hope is from what Mr. Lovegood, the excellent minister of the parish in which I now am, has advised me to read, which is still to be found in our old Common Prayer Books, in the lamentation of a sinner:

Mercy, good Lord ! mercy I ask,
This is the total sum ;
For mercy, Lord, is all my suit,
Lord, let thy mercy come.

“Receive these few lines from your truly penitent,
and as truly affectionate,

“JEMIMA CHIPMAN.”

Lower Brookfield, near Mapleton.

Having thus laid the two letters before my readers, they will naturally conclude, that something interesting may be the result of Henry's return; and as these events will be detailed in the succeeding Dialogues, I hope they may prove not less instructing than any of the former.

DIALOGUE XVIII.

MR. WORTHY AND FAMILY, MR. LOVEGOOD,
AND MR. MERRYMAN.

THE CHARACTER AND EXPERIENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN
MINISTER EXEMPLIFIED.

As Henry Littleworth, from a variety of circumstances, was detained some weeks at Locksbury on Mrs. Chipman's affairs; a detail of other events, during that interval, may not be unacceptable to the reader.

There were a few serious and godly clergymen, about the neighbourhood of Brookfield, who were in the habit of associating together in rotation, at each other's houses, for the purpose of mutual edification in their sacred work. A meeting of this sort, was held at Mr. Lovegood's, during the time that Mrs. Chipman's affairs were in agitation. At these meetings one of the ministers always preached in his turn. This office now fell to the lot of Mr. Merryman; and an admirable and affecting sermon he preached, in some respects not less suitable to his own experience than to that of Mrs. Chipman, from the following text: "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." This sermon was not less grateful to the mind of Mr. Lovegood, than consolatory to the wounded conscience of the unhappy Mrs. Chipman. They say also, that the sermon was blessed to Mr. Gauger,

the exciseman of the Parish, who being himself an ignorant and giddy youth, and having heard that Mr. Merryman was, till of late, one of his own stamp, was struck with his warm and affectionate address from the above-mentioned text, and that he now lives to God, as being himself also "alive from the dead." Mr. Merryman, who was supposed to have some secret inclination towards Miss Worthy, continued after this meeting, principally the guest of Mr. Worthy, for some days. A Sabbath intervening, an exchange of labour was mutually agreed upon between Mr. Lovegood and Mr. Merryman, while such a friendly and Christian intercourse proved of equal advantage to both their congregations. Mr. Worthy found himself very happy with such a guest in his house, as his domestic chaplain; and if in deep thought and contemplative religion, he was inferior to Mr. Lovegood, yet he was possessed of a lively zeal, which rendered him a very useful Minister to many of his neighbours, and a most pleasant companion to all who knew him:

Under a sanctified use of his natural vivacity, and constitutional courage, he was ever ready to impress on others the same blessed truths, by the knowledge of which, a change so glorious had been accomplished on his own mind. Thus, while at Mr. Worthy's, he would go round his pleasure grounds, and talk to all his labourers: if he stepped into the stable-yard, or into any of the neighbouring cottages, he would have some instructive hints to drop, or some religious tracts to distribute, that he might leave a savour of the Gospel wherever he went; and this he did in such a cheerful and engaging style, as frequently rendered him very successful in his attempts.

In the days of his ignorance he was light, frothy, and vain; but as soon as he was made a partaker of the grace of God, though he retained all that be-

longed to his natural disposition, yet he had cheerfulness without levity, and became not less profitable, than lovely and pleasant in his deportment. It is, however, a very supposable event, that persons of such natural vivacity should fall into some innocent mistakes; and an instance of this kind was exhibited by Mr. Merryman, during this visit.

One morning he called at Thomas Newman's, with whose company and conduct he was much delighted: while there, old Susan Dowdy, an honest shoemaker's wife, called in with a pair of shoes for Betty, and with others belonging to the children; which had been carefully cobbled. Thomas being remarkably laborious, could not live without his rest; and being as remarkably honest, he could not rest if he was in debt: while he was therefore preparing to pay the demand, Mr. Merryman very affectionately discharged it for him. Upon the departure of old Dowdy, Mr. Merryman having discovered that she knew something of the blessed realities of the Gospel, mentioned to Thomas, that his next visit should be to see her and her husband. "Ah!" said Thomas, "I believe she is a precious old dame; but it was Dowdy's money made the match." Betty adjoins, "My dear, that is nothing to us; all have a right to settle those matters as they like best:" and Mr. Merryman being frequently a little absent, dropped all farther investigation of the subject.

On the next day the promised visit took place. As soon as Mr. Merryman entered the house, he saw an active young man most diligently occupied at his stall; a young woman as industriously engaged in the household affairs; and the notable old woman at her spinning-wheel, with the spectacles over her nose, pulling and tugging away as fast and as hard as she could; and her husband's grandfather,

sitting in the chimney corner, quite decrepit with age. Alas for Mr. Merryman! he first began conversing with the husband's grandfather, as the husband of old Dowdy; next with the husband as her son, and then with the other young woman as the young man's wife, though she proved to be Dowdy's daughter by a former marriage: still supposing himself perfectly correct. The family kept silence, not being willing to expose themselves: and the prayer with which he concluded his visit, was a distinct echo of all these unfortunate mistakes.

On the evening of the day at Mr. Worthy's, he gave the history of his visits: the family knowing the preposterous match which had taken place between old Dowdy, who had an annuity of twelve pounds annually, and her young husband; joined in a general laugh at the expense of Mr. Merryman's blunder, —a blunder not to be corrected by any apology whatever. However, all agreed, that as good men do good, even by their innocent mistakes, it might answer as an excellent reproof, to the parties concerned; as all such preposterous matches, are very contrary to that decency and propriety of conduct we should be careful to maintain in our social and relative connexions through life; especially if we profess to be under the regulation of the pure and holy word of God.

However, it will at once be admitted, that such *blunders* were no *blemishes* in the character of one, whose natural simplicity and undisguised integrity, and whose uncommon tenderness and humanity, were of late become so very conspicuous. Still, whatever Mr. Merryman did, it was all done in his own way. A specimen of this was exhibited during his present visit to Mr. Worthy.

On the Thursday after the Sabbath, he went on a little business to Mapleton Market. A bustle was

created by the anxiety of a cow, in attending upon her calf, while driven about the market: and in the bustle, a board on which an old woman had placed her oranges, apples, and gingerbread, &c. was upset: a rabble of children attempted to avail themselves of this misfortune, and began a scramble for her goods. This lovely Mr. Merryman humanely considered that her little all was then at stake, and that if she was permitted to be robbed of her slender stock in trade, the calamity would be deeply felt. Immediately he snatched an oaken stick out of the hands of a gaping peasant who stood by: drove away the unruly mob, and then gave his helping hand to collect the poor woman's scattered commodities, and to replace them on the board. He next gave the clown a sixpence, for the use of his cudgel, who *doff'd* his hat and thanked *his honour* for his kindness; next he gave half a crown to the poor old woman, as much of her barley-sugar was so broken as to be unfit for sale. She then begged leave to reward Mr. Merryman's kindness with one of her best oranges, which he accepted; rewarding her with another shilling for her gratitude, and then departed: she sending after him a thousand blessings for the kind protection she had received in the hour of her distress. Her next inquiry was, who the young gentleman could be who treated her with such kindness, and when she was told that it was Mr. Merryman, the rector of Sandover, she remarked that she was sure he must be a good Christian-hearted gentleman; that she had heard many people say, that though he was a sad wicked *blade* once, yet of late he had been wonderfully reformed; and that since then, he had become a *brave* man in the pulpit; and vowed she would strive hard but that she would go and hear him. And who knows, the old woman's heart having been softened

by this kind event, but that when she was able to put her resolution into effect, the word of life she heard might have become "the power of God to the eternal salvation of her soul?"

Perhaps the reader may judge by another instance of Mr. Merryman's way of doing good, what was the real style and spirit of his character.

He was in the habit of giving an occasional visit to Mr. Meek; and was, as we may naturally suppose, registered among the list of his contributors, that the good man might not suffer a state next to starvation, from the cruelty and meanness of the redoubtable Rector Fillpot.

On Mr. Merryman's return from this visit, when he was within three miles of Sandover, he observed a poor disbanded soldier, who could scarcely totter along the road, sustaining the burden of a heavy knapsack, although in a deep decline, and travelling home for parochial relief. The few shillings which were given him upon his discharge were now exhausted: and the weather being warm, he could afford himself no better beverage than a draught of water from a ditch on the road-side. While he made this attempt he fell down, and had not power to arise. Mr. Merryman at first supposed he might be intoxicated, as he observed many passing by without taking the least notice of him. However, he thought he would ride up to him, and inquire into the real state of the case; and as soon as he discovered him to be the object of such commiseration, his heart began to melt: immediately, wiping the sympathetic tear which was preparing to start from his eye, he placed him upon his own beast, and led him to Sandover, with the greatest attention and care.

If ever humanity rode triumphant, it was on this occasion; when a youth who, till of late had been so dissipated and careless, having obtained mercy him-

self, began to exemplify it in such kind abundance to others. Thus, as Mr. Merryman's heart was teeming with compassion, all the time the poor soldier was beholding, with astonishment and surprise, the tenderness and love of his most kind conductor; while so many others could pass by, without showing even the most distant inclination to give him the least relief.

As soon as they arrived at Sandover, Mr. Merryman provided the poor man a lodging in a decent public-house, left him half a crown for his present necessities, and promised on the next day to repeat his visit. It was Mr. Merryman's intention to have sent the poor soldier home to his own connexions, in a style more consistent with humanity; but this was soon found to be entirely impracticable: the progress of his disease becoming very rapid. However, he lived a sufficient length of time, to give good evidence, that he was brought to deep repentance under a sense of the evil of sin, his former life having been dissolute; and he died with an humble confidence in "the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life;" which afterwards he improved in an admirable manner from the pulpit, it is hoped to the good of many souls.

This lovely instance however of humanity exhibited by Mr. Merryman, in having thus turned footman to the poor soldier, made a considerable talk; and bore such an odd appearance, especially in the eyes of the prudish and the formal, though so near a resemblance of what our Lord applauded in the merciful Samaritan, that it naturally subjected him to some ridicule and contempt. Mr. Spiteful said, he always thought him a low, mean fellow; and that he was much fitter to be the helper of a groom in a stable-yard, than to mount the pulpit. And it seems Mr. Archdeacon Smoothtongue's objection was, that

it was letting down the dignity of the clerical character; and that it was all affectation, and a sort of *Quixote* righteousness, that all the orderly clergy should be ashamed of; though, it is to be feared, the Archdeacon himself had no better righteousness than that of priestly pomp, while Mr. Merryman's friends and neighbours well knew the integrity of his heart. All he did, in his free and easy manner, appeared lovely in their sight; especially when they considered the principle of divine grace whereby he was thus constrained to act.

After the above observations and anecdotes, I should suppose the reader might wish to know still more of Mr. Merryman, and how it was that so blessed a change had been wrought upon his mind. The following Dialogue shall therefore give the reader the information he wishes to receive.

The decorations designed for the Golden Lion have already been noticed: and these having been speedily accomplished, as the spring was now advancing, Mr. Worthy and family, Mr. Lovegood and Mr. Merryman, one week-day evening walked thither to examine their effects; and in order to give proper encouragement to the worthy publican, directed that tea should be brought out, the weather being then remarkably fine and serene, under a large spreading pear-tree. While Mr. Worthy's game-keeper was directed to bring a casting-net, that they might take some trout out of the meandering brook from whence the village is named, for the use of the family, and as a present for Mr. Lovegood; during this innocent amusement, properly so called, the following conversation took place.

Wor. I suppose you have heard what Mr. Spiteful has reported respecting Mrs. Chipman's affairs.

Loveg. Mr. Considerate told me some of his charges, that our designs towards her were not less criminal than those of Sir Charles Dash.

Mer. Well, I should never have thought you would have been charged with such sort of crimes.

Loveg. It is of very little consequence what he says, his ravings are too bad to hurt any one but himself, as nobody can believe them.

Mrs. Wor. Nor need he have any farther chastisement for his wicked spirit, than what he has from his own disposition. When he was in the habit of coming into our house, I used to dread his visits, for he was sure to entertain us with every scandalous tale he could pick up; he would be telling of every one's faults but his own. But directly after we were favoured with your visits, we were soon released from his.

Mer. I remember, a very intruding chap in our neighbourhood used to come and visit my father oftener than he liked, and he discovered that he had a peculiar aversion to the smell of toasted cheese: in order, therefore, to get rid of his impertinent visits, the cheese-toaster was sure to be set at work.

Wor. There was no need of a cheese-toaster when you were with us; he would be off like a pistol.

Miss Wor. What a blessing to be delivered from such a disposition! May it not be said that what fits for hell, in a measure is hell?

Loveg. Indeed it is; and if we expect any other heaven, than what is found in love, we know nothing of heaven. How wonderfully God suits our punishment to our crimes! I suppose no people are so tortured as those who are possessed of such satanic minds.

Mr. Wor.—I was delighted to hear you urge so strongly the necessity of these tempers. "Be kindly affectioned one to another, in honour preferring one

another." I am surprised that any should suppose themselves to be Christians without them.

Mer. Before I knew any thing of the power of divine grace, there were seasons in which my hasty tempers would get the upper hand of me. But—

Miss Wor. [interrupts] I don't like to hear you charge yourself on that score; if you were once dissipated and wild, I never heard that your tempers were bad.

Mer. I am ashamed when I recollect, for near two years after I was ordained, what a disgrace I was to my profession. I do not know that my tempers led me to be spiteful, malicious, and sulky, though at times I was hasty. I was entirely captivated by other evils: a more thoughtless dissipated creature, never lived upon the earth.

Wor. Why I am afraid, Mr. Merryman, you never were in the way of good, till you heard Mr. Lovegood at the visitation.

Mer. Indeed, sir, from my childhood, I never had any thing placed before me, but what was calculated to feed the corrupt propensities of my heart. My poor father had but a small fortune, with a large family: and though he was in the law line, he did not get much by his profession; for there were too many lawyers in our town: and they were in general such greedy sharks, that they stuck at nothing; so that people thought it necessary to submit to any thing, sooner than employ a lawyer.

Wor. I am afraid then you had but a bad example at home.

Mer. I cannot recollect that there was much outward immorality practised in our house, excepting that my father was much given to swearing; and he never went to Church, and my mother very seldom.

Loveg. How then did your father spend his time on a Sunday?

Mer. Mostly in his office, and in his business. He did all in his power to avoid the expense and trouble of keeping a clerk.

Loveg. Then there was no outward sign or ceremony kept up in your family, from which you might gather the existence of a God?

Mer. It grieves me to say, I was bred up in perfect ignorance. We had not even with us the decent form of asking a blessing over our meals.

Wor. Then how came your parents to think of breeding you up to the Church, as it is called?

Mer. O sir! though it was my father's design to have educated me in his own profession, yet from my infancy I never could fix on any thing. And the dry study of the law was so contrary to my natural inclinations, that my father could never get me to submit to it at any rate. While I was *fagging* at the office, I would make any excuse to go and shoot the sparrows off the peas and fruit in the garden. In the summer I would run away and show all possible tricks and fancies as an expert swimmer and diver; and in the winter, during a hard frost, he could never keep me off the ice; while I was as proud and vain of my ability as a skater, as I was gratified and pleased with the admiration of the spectators.

Wor. But it must be acknowledged, these are among the more innocent of the diversions of youth; though it is a difficult matter to correct young minds in the excess of them; and when the inclinations are captivated by them, no wonder if such should be given over to an idle and dissipated frame of mind, all the days of their lives.

Mer. I don't know that I first pursued these pleasures with what may be called an immoral design: but from the unguarded levity of my mind, I soon found that this disposition grew up with me; and that I was entirely captivated and overcome by them: so

that after I was ordained, I am ashamed to think, how much more I was wedded to my sports, than to the Church. And though I did all in my power to put on a little decency, in not running after them quite so eagerly on a Sunday as on a week-day; yet notwithstanding the day, if I heard of a hare, or a covey of partridges being near my house, I was sure to be after them. And as for skating, I was no sooner out of the church, than I was on the ice. And I remember one Sunday, while I was skating, an old gentleman, who was a justice of peace, who is since dead, sent a constable after me, begging that I would not break the Sabbath, but set a better example to my parishioners. As for other idle amusements, such as cricket matches, hunting and coursing, I was at all times a ringleader in these sports. And after I had done with my out-of-door diversions, the rest of my time was sure to be spent at a playhouse, or in a ball or billiard room, or at a card table. Even such a low, paltry amusement as a puppet-show, a country wake or revel, would captivate my attention, and draw me aside. I am quite ashamed of myself, to think how giddy and foolish I have been. In short, I was captivated by every vain amusement but those of cock-fighting, and bull-baiting: these abominable exhibitions of cruelty, even at that period, were very disgusting to me.

Wor. But did it not strike you that hunting, and especially horse-racing, were but very little less cruel than bull-baiting or cock-fighting?

Mer. Yes, thoughts of that sort would at times occur; but it was in my heart to "run with the multitude to do evil:" and I have since experienced, that we know nothing of the real tenderness which possesses the Christian, till the living power of Christianity has been communicated to our hearts.

Loveg. Then you must have been sadly out of your element when you got into orders.

Mer. Indeed I was, excepting when I turned soldier; and got a captain's commission during the war. And when the salutary advice of the Bishops came out against us, to support by our conduct and advice our excellent civil constitution, but not to turn our black coats into red ones, I confess I very much disliked it. For nothing but worldly motives was I sent into the Church, and while I hated my black coat, I hated equally my contemptible inconsistency all the time I wore a red one.

Wor. Alas! how much it is to be lamented, that matters of such infinite importance should be given over into such hands! In this instance, what man did as evil, God has overruled for good. But you have not yet told us, while you were in such a thoughtless state, how you came to think of the Church.

Mer. Indeed, sir, that never was a thought of mine. But when my father and uncle, who had the family estate, were together, he used to *swear* (though I never liked his reprobate language) that I was so thoughtless and inattentive, that I should never get my bread by law, physic, or trade; and that I should be fit for *nothing but a parson*. My uncle therefore promised him, that if he would send me to the University, as he had two livings belonging to his estates, he would give me one of them, provided none of his own children chose to take orders. And as all my cousins were much fonder of the sea and army than of the Church, I was obliged to submit to the penalty of being *turned into a parson*, for the sake of a living. And when the living of Sandover became vacant, my uncle gave it to old Mr. Mumble, who was between seventy and eighty years of age, and in bad health, on condition that I should be his curate; and I had not been his curate above nine months before he died, and then my uncle presented me with the living.

Mrs. Wor. I thought it was common to put mi-

nisters into possession of livings, on condition of a resignation.

Mer. Yes, but my father, as a lawyer, knew that no law whatever could compel any minister to resign his living, if he chose to keep it; so he supposed that was the safer way.

Wor. What terrible merchandise is made of the souls of men by such a traffic; and how ruinous is it in its consequences to real religion in the Church!

Mer. I am sure this had nearly proved my ruin; for after this matter was determined upon, I was to be *packed* off to a public school, where every thing like religion was as much out of the question, as it well could be, excepting that we were all compelled to go to church on a Sunday.

Loveg. When I received the first rudiments of my education at the free grammar school at Beachly, we had never the least intimation given us, even in a formal way, about religion; but in my time, I found it much worse at the University, than at Beachly.

Mer. I am sure the state of too many of the clergy can never be wondered at, when we consider the method of their education for the ministry;—though in those days, I was so loose and wild, that I thought nothing about the matter.

Wor. Why I thought our Universities were in general repute; and that all who applied might avail themselves of an excellent education; at least I found it so when I was there.

Loveg. Sir, your remark is perfectly just; but I am sorry to add, at least as it was in my days, leaving religion out of the question. You are frowned upon if you are over righteous, or over wicked; but as to real spiritual religion, though I confess I am but a poor judge how matters then stood, yet I fear it is very little thought of. However, I remember that there were some reproachful sneers circulated against a few,

that since then I have heard were really serious; but they were obliged to keep themselves very close, "for fear of the Philistines." But I must confess, that though I was kept correctly *moral* and attentive while at college, yet I knew nothing of real *spirituality*, till about three months after I was curate of Abley.

Mrs. Wor. I think, sir, you have told us before now, that the first serious impressions you ever felt, were when you began to try to make your own sermons.

Loveg. Though I had my qualms when at college, that all was not right, yet, madam, it was in a great measure so; for as I was accustomed to make the exercises for the boys at school, and was frequently occupied in the same way at the University, I thought after all this, it would be quite scandalous for me to go about to buy, beg, and borrow sermons, after I was admitted into orders.

Mrs. Wor. Dear sir, as your coming into these parts was such a blessing to our family, and many more besides ourselves, if you don't interrupt Mr. Merryman we should be glad if you would proceed on a subject so interesting to us all.

Loveg. Why, madam, when I began to try to compose my own sermons, it came into my mind, that I should make them somewhat like the Bible. The Bishop, when he ordained us, said we should not always be preaching mere moral essays; but that at *times* we should dwell on the evangelical truths of the Bible.

Wor. Well, sir, that was good advice.

Loveg. It proved excellent advice to me; for it immediately set me on the study of the New Testament: but alas! I soon found the spiritual eye was wanting, whereby spiritual truths alone can be discerned: for as to many things I found in the gospel,

I had enough to do even to make them out; but when I came to the epistles, I soon discovered myself to be quite out of my depth, as the few pre-conceived notions I had of religion, seemed to be entirely contradicted by them. And when I had procured some of the fashionable commentators of the day, such as Whitby, Locke, and Zachary Pearce, formerly Bishop of Rochester; all I got from them confused me but the more; as it always struck me that the comment contradicted the text, and that instead of explaining matters, they seemed to be explaining them away. Some things were to be confined to primitive times, and others restricted to the Christians, as just coming from under the Jewish dispensation; and much of the Bible was to mean next to nothing, because it was figurative and metaphorical; but when I came to look at Zachary Pearce's comment on that striking passage, "One thing is needful;" notwithstanding all his learning, that completely did for him in my esteem.

Wor. Why, what did he make of it?

Loveg. That one dish was enough for supper.

Wor. Is it possible? what a strange letting down of such a fine expression!

Mer. Yes, and I remember with shame, in our different carousings with each other, in our profane mirth, how we used to laugh at the interpretation, by saying, neither one dish nor one bottle would be enough for us.

Loveg. Well, well, I bless God, I could get no satisfaction from these lame interpreters, for with all their learning, they appeared to me to be so inconsistent with themselves. And one evening, how was I struck, when seeking for a text? my eyes were fixed on those words of St. Paul, in his epistle to the Colossians—"Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." For a time I could make nothing

of the expression, till others, very similar, forcibly entered my mind, about being "crucified with Christ;" being "dead and buried with him;" and of our "being risen with him;" and then that passage in our church catechism, as it relates to what is required of all baptized Christians, "a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness." It struck me, that I had been directed to instruct children in a doctrine which was unknown to my own heart, and that I was a "blind leader of the blind." At that moment I fell down on my knees, and wept excessively; and prayed, I think from the bottom of my heart for the first time, that I might not presume to continue to be the pretended instructor of the ignorant, while so ignorant myself.

Wor. I suppose after this, the tenor of your preaching was immediately altered.

Loveg. Sir, the change was still gradual. I knew I was wrong, but I did not know how I could be set right. But herein the providence of God wonderfully favoured me.

Mer. I have often heard you explain the nature of our conversion from sin to God; but I never heard you explain so particularly the nature of your own conversion.—I wish you would proceed.

Loveg. When I first came to my curacy, I was told that five or six people went regularly, Sunday after Sunday, to hear the Rev. Mr. Slapdash, who has a small living in those parts. You know he is an animated, bold preacher, and is attended by a large congregation; and I never could hear but that his zeal is tempered with prudence; and that he is a good man: and that though he has a strong, rapid, hasty way of expressing himself, yet what he delivers is entirely consistent with the sound truths of the gospel. Still their absenting themselves from the church gave considerable offence to the pride of my heart, not

knowing that it was my ignorance which drove them at a distance.

However, one Sunday, these young men, contrary to their usual custom, stopt at home to hear me. It was soon after that text of scripture so impressed my mind. Ignorance of my Bible, and consequently, unfitness for my office, intermixed with our workings of corruption, from the pride and anger of my heart on account of my dark preconceived notions in religion, having been so contradicted by the word of God, affected me not a little. In this state of mind I was obliged to preach as well as I could; and I remember I was remarkably low and affected, on the Sunday these young men stopt to hear me. And while I was preaching, I saw them nodding and smiling, first at me, and then at each other, in such an uncommon manner, that I could not conceive but that they meant to be laughing at me all the time for my ignorance; especially as it was reported, that the man they went to hear was quite a madman: and upon this I went the next day, to converse with them on what I conceived to be their odd conduct at church. My mind being much perplexed, and my spirits very low; and having determined to speak to them with much mildness, I no sooner began to open my mouth, but tears started from my eyes. I told them they should not have laughed at me before all the congregation, on account of what they thought of my ignorance, for that I did my best; and that I hoped and prayed to God, if I was not right, he would set me right.

Wor. Well, and what effect had this upon the young men?

Loveg. O sir! the good young men were as much affected as myself, at my misconceptions of them. They told me that their smiles and nods were the effect, not of sneering contempt, but of approbation

and joy; for they were now fully persuaded that I should soon become a faithful minister of the gospel: and that they never went to church while young Mr. Wanton was the curate, yet as they saw me so different from him, and as it was reported that I was likely soon to be mad with melancholy, they thought I might be under some serious impressions respecting the state of my soul: and if I continued to preach as I had done, they should soon discontinue hearing Mr. Slapdash, though he was a very powerful and lively preacher, as they called him, and a very good man.

Wor. Then you discovered that these young men were truly serious and good.

Loveg. Yes, and two of them I found to be useful and profitable companions to me, having good understandings, which they had well improved by reading among themselves various religious authors. And I was much struck before we parted, at the great modesty with which they expressed themselves, wishing I would but read some of their books which they read among themselves, that they might have my opinion how far I approved of them. They then showed me their little library; and one of them particularly requested me to read the *Pilgrim's Progress*, with very precious notes, which they said, by way of recommending it, were written by a very learned man, and which I was the more willing to do, as I remembered reading it as a novel when a child. Among other books, I saw they had Brown's self-interpreting Bible, and as I began to be entirely sick of my old commentators, I begged to borrow it. This they very readily consented to; so I put the *Pilgrim's Progress* in one pocket, and Boston's *Four-fold State* in the other, and went home: and when I took my leave of them, I was very much surprised at their humble and affectionate farewell; following me with a thousand bless-

ings, and thanking me most cordially for my visit. Soon afterwards I found one of them at my heels with Brown's Bible, which they wished me to keep as long as I chose.

Wor. Well, this was a kind Providence. But how did you seem to like your new authors? did you much admire their choice of books for you? The Pilgrim's Progress, I confess, is an inimitable drama, and beautifully describes the state of the real Christian in his spiritual progress; yet Bunyan, in the general way, happens to be the humble treasure of divinity in the poor man's cottage; and I fear is not so often to be found in the study of a contemplative divine.

Loveg. Sir, if God had conferred on me the honour of being the author of the Pilgrim's Progress, I should have been tempted to be the proudest man upon earth. However, the simplicity and affection of the good people I went to see, led me to cast my eyes over that book a second time, very much to my profit. For on the same day I shut myself up in my study, and began to read. Page after page, my attention was arrested: and as I pursued the subject, light continued to break in upon my mind, while it brought me upon my knees again and again. I now began to see, somewhat clearly, the plan of the gospel salvation alone by Jesus Christ. Every paragraph I read was intermixed with a tear of thankfulness and surprise; and night after night, I was happy to be sleepless, that I might pursue the pilgrims on their road, as I now began to find I could travel with them, while every step appeared plain before me.

Mer. It is a lovely work, when we can read and meditate under such a frame of mind. I remember how I used to hate to read the Bible, merely because I could not understand it; but as soon as I could enter into its meaning, I found no book like it. I

recollect, some time ago, in the library at my house, I laid my hands upon a book written by Bishop Patrick, called the Parable of the Pilgrim, but I found it a heavy performance.

Loveg. Yes, sir, I have heard of it. It is a large lumpy volume, though the Bishop was a serious and respectable man; yet while Bunyan keeps you awake, Patrick lulls you asleep.

Mer. It seems then, that the Tinker was a wiser man than the Bishop.

Loveg. Why no man gets either brains or grace, by education or title: many gifts of this sort we may receive as the gifts of the God of nature, or of providence; but a sanctified use of these blessings, comes only from the God of grace. Bunyan was certainly a very eminent man in his plain way.—Once, it seems, he was very profligate, but afterwards not less serious: and though he had none of the advantages of education, yet he was possessed of a very good natural understanding, a deep knowledge of the word of God, and of the human heart, and at the same time very rich and chaste powers of invention. Such was the character of the author of the Pilgrim's Progress; and, to the last moment of my life, shall I bless God for that book.

Mer. But if this formerly wicked tinker became so good a man, and such an excellent preacher and writer, is it not to be lamented that some of our present preachers were not turned into tinkers, provided we could get such another set of tinkers to be turned into preachers?

Wor. I perceive Mr. Merryman will be Mr. Merryman still. But we interrupt Mr. Lovegood in his story.

Loveg. Why, I bless God, that I immediately found myself not less charmed with my Bible, than with the Pilgrim's Progress: its glorious contents

began to open surprisingly to my mind, and the truths which before displeased me, I not only could receive without controversy, but with supreme approbation and delight.

Mrs. Wor. You have also told us, what great advantage you received from Mrs. Goodworth, after you became acquainted with her; perhaps Mr. Merriyman does not know that circumstance.

Mer. Who was Mrs. Goodworth?

Loveg. She was the aged widow of a Dissenting Minister; and when I first came into the parish, I was told that she was such an ill-natured, cross-grained, dissenting bigot, that she would sooner see the church pulled down than enter within the doors. But a few days after my visit to the young men, they went and informed her of the result of our conversation, and the next Sunday, to my great surprise, I found her added to the number of my congregation; and as much delighted and affected as the young men were, the Sunday before. On the Monday I thought it my duty to return the visit. I found the old lady nursing her grandchildren: she took me into a little back parlour, and immediately burst into tears of joy, telling me, that through the straitness of her circumstances, she was obliged to live with her married daughter; mentioning how much it had affected her, having been under the necessity of leaving the means of grace, by living at a distance from the meeting where her husband preached; and that since she could not go after the gospel, she humbly trusted that in answer to her fervent prayers, the gospel was now sent after her: that she never kept from the church out of bigotry, but only because she feared Mr. Wanton, my predecessor, was very impure, and consequently a very improper man to administer the word of life to others; being himself "dead in trespasses and sins;" but that now she not only meant

to come to church, but to sacrament if I would permit her. She then asked me to go to prayer: this was new work to me, and put me to the blush. However, as I had lately in private found my way to a throne of grace, I did not refuse, though if it had not been for shame I should rather have put that office upon the old lady: as I am sure I needed her prayers for my growth in grace, and for my increase in divine knowledge. The next time the communion was administered, she was with us at the table; and I well remember, when I gave her the elements, how affectionately she looked up at me, and wept so plentifully that she even bedewed my hands with her tears.

Mrs. Wor. What a sweet proof this was of the loving and uniting spirit of the gospel, among all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity!

Wor. I have no doubt, but your acquaintance with the good old lady, was very profitable.

Loveg. Yes, sir; and still more so, as I got acquainted with her library: for though she had sold some of her husband's books, yet others of them she had preserved. Among these, I found many of the writings of Owen, Flavel, President Edwards, Gurnall's Christian in complete Armour, Archbishop Usher on the Sum and Substance of the Christian Religion, Bishop Downham on Justification, Bishop Hall's Works, and others. These she used to call her Sunday company; and to these I had at all times free access: and about three years afterwards, when she found herself in dying circumstances, she gave me several of them as keepsakes.

Mer. The loss of this good old lady, must have considerably affected you.

Loveg. Yes; but then her death was so glorious! On my last visit she cried, "This is not dying; believers never die: I am just going to enter the pre-

sence chamber of my Lord." And then she sung, or rather attempted to sing, with peculiar melody of heart, that verse from Dr. Watts, (whose hymns she frequently quoted in her last sickness,)

Jesus can make a dying bed
Feel soft as downy pillows are;
While on his breast I lean my head,
And breathe my life out sweetly there.

Then she paused and said, taking me by the hand affectionately, here I lie, just going to glory; and then repeated another verse:

A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On thy kind arms I fall;
Be thou my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus and my all.

Then she would cry out, "O! this precious believing in the Son of God!" "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him;" "He hath loved me, and given himself for me;" and "he sheds abroad this his most precious love in my heart;" and "I feel it like a warm coal of living fire, while I am struggling in the cold arms of death." Thus she went on, blessing and praising God, and triumphing in the redeeming love of Christ, to the latest moments of her life; repeatedly saying, "O Death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?" O sir! it is a glorious sight, to see believers departing in the triumphs of faith, and with "a hope full of immortality."

Wor. No doubt, but that your acquaintance with all these good people, proved a considerable help, though they were inferior to you in point of *educational* knowledge.

Loveg. Yes; but I found myself much inferior to

them in point of *experimental* knowledge. No earthly wisdom, however good in its place, will do as a substitute for "that wisdom which is from above." But I soon got acquainted with two very excellent clergymen in those parts, and with a worthy dissenting minister, whose name was Peaceful; and who was in the habit of calling on Mrs. Goodworth, though they all lived at some distance from us.

Wor. We should be glad if you would tell us how that was brought about.

Loveg. Why, sir, the next Sunday, only two of the young men attended the church, and I suspect they went over to Mr. Slapdash; for about a fortnight after, I received an anonymous, though an affectionate letter, signed "*Paucis inter Clerum*,"* mentioning their exceeding joy on the report which had been communicated to them, declaring at the same time, that they sought my acquaintance from the purest motives of Christianity, and from a desire of cultivating the most affectionate intimacy with all the spiritual and evangelical ministers of their own community. Interwoven in this letter, there was a great number of very strong and animated expressions, warning me against the fear of man; and charging me to preach the gospel, and the gospel only, faithfully, and directly to the sinner's heart and conscience, as far as divine light broke in upon my mind; so that it immediately struck me, that Mr. Slapdash was the principal composer of the letter.

Wor. Well, sir, and there is no doubt but this proved a gracious circumstance in your favour.

Loveg. Sir, it proved a gracious circumstance indeed: for I immediately wrote an answer to their truly affectionate letter, and a few days after, Mr. Slapdash came over to my lodgings; and how the

* From a few among the clergy.

dear man rejoiced over me to find me in such a frame of mind! Indeed, all things considered, he proved the best, and most suitable companion I ever met with. You know I am naturally timid; Mr. Slapdash is altogether Lutheran and bold, yet not less loving and affectionate; and though, perhaps, every word he advances may not be within the severer rules of moderation, yet I believe that his bold strokes, and *wild notes* are more serviceable for the good of his neighbours, than all the fine *set music*, we may have about the country besides.

Mer. How long, sir, did you continue in that curacy?

Loveg. Not much more than four years: for when I began to be serious, and to preach the salvation of Christ, my Rector was soon informed of it, and wrote me several letters on my "new notions of religion," as he called them, which brought on a long epistolary correspondence. But when he heard that I had preached a funeral sermon on the death of Mrs. Goodworth, and that I walked with Mr. Peaceful, as a brother minister, to the grave, his patience was quite exhausted, and he gave me warning to quit.

Wor. Why, where could be the harm of that?

Loveg. Sir, my Rector had imbibed all the strange, wild, high-church notions of Mr. Daubeney and others, in such an extravagant manner, that he supposed I had been guilty of the most enormous crime, in preaching a funeral sermon over one that had received schismatical baptism, and had lived in schism almost all the days of her life.

Mer. Why, did not your preaching bring her back again to the church?

Loveg. Yes, but all that operated against me: he supposed me to be at least half a schismatic myself, since such a set of schismatical people ran after me. And again, he had heard from the neighbouring

clergy, that I drew away people from their regular attendance at their own parish churches: thus, for having a full church, and for bringing Dissenters to the communion, I lost my curacy.

Wor. I am afraid that many others of the clergy are much more worthy of the blame charged on you; who, by their false doctrine and improper conduct, drive churchmen to be dissenters by thousands.—But though you have often told us what a painful dismissal this was to you, when you were compelled to leave a congregation so seriously impressed, and being also the first-fruits of your ministry; yet it proved a happy event for us.

Loveg. Sir, “God’s ways are not as our ways.” What man designs as evil, he frequently overrules for good; and I bless his name, I was not sent there but for gracious purposes. For after I had been in my curacy about three years, I thought it a call in providence, that I should marry the sister of one of the young men who visited me, and who was a creditable farmer’s daughter, having a small freehold of his own; so that I got in the parish of Abley, two of the greatest blessings in life, a good wife, and the knowledge of the gospel.

Mer. It is a great mercy, when we can leave all things in the hands of God: “he doeth all things well.”

Loveg. In many instances I found this to be the case; for being thus dismissed from my curacy, the pity of many was excited towards me; though from that hour to this, I never could discover who it was that represented my case to the notice of the Chancellor, when I received the presentation to the vicarage of this parish. All I know is, that a short, kind letter was sent, asking me the question, that as the Chancellor had heard of my character and situation, he wished to know if the living of Lower Brookfield

would be worth my acceptance. I was happy to embrace the kind offer immediately. Our first child was born about three weeks before this event took place; and just when we began to harbour unbelieving fears about how we could subsist upon our scanty income, this merciful event in providence took place.

Wor. Alas, sir! the living of Brookfield is still but a scanty maintenance for yourself and family.

Loveg. Why, sir, my curacy was but sixty pounds a year, so that the living of this parish has above doubled my income, besides the privilege of being independent in the discharge of my duty, which was never the case while I was curate of Abley. My Rector was always saying, that I was feeding my own vanity, in affecting to be more abundantly zealous than others; and as this sort of conduct indirectly reflected upon the rest of the clergy, who were contented to do no more than what was regularly expected from them, he could by no means allow his curate to do more than others.

Mer. Ah, sir! it would have been well for me, if my living had been no better than yours; but as it is, I suppose, about four times the value, I found myself quite at liberty to run after that which I liked best. Thus from the income of my living, which I received for *spiritual* purposes, I could procure for myself all that my *carnal* heart could wish to enjoy.

Wor. Well, sir, you now know the worth of the gospel since you have felt its power, and when our hearts are converted to God, we shall dedicate our property to his glory. But there is a sad inequality in church preferment, and that is frequently sadly disposed of.

Mrs. Wor. Now, Mr. Merryman, we shall be glad to hear you again. You have told us enough of the worst part of your story, but nothing of the better:

will you next favour us with the latter part of your narrative? No doubt but that it will be much more pleasing than the former.

Mer. Why, madam, there has been with me so much of the bad and so little of the good, that I am sorry to say, you will soon hear all I have got to advance on that subject: though I must relate, to my shame, more of the bad, before I tell you any thing of the good.

Mrs. Wor. Had you then no serious impressions before you heard our minister at the visitation?

Mer. Madam, till that time, I was acting as the vainest puppy that ever lived; always affecting the easy air of the conceited gentleman, and as much ashamed of my professional character as I well could be; yet I by no means found myself happy in my light, frothy state of mind.

Loveg. No wonder that you were ashamed of your professional character while you acted as you did.

Mer. Yes, but while I was engaged in my office many a stinging conviction was brought home to my mind: for while I was reading the prayers, and acknowledging sin, in language in itself so humble and just, saying that "I had done those things which I ought not to have done, and that I had left undone those things which I ought to have done, and that there was no health in me;" and that "God would not despise the sighings of a contrite heart, or the desire of such as are sorrowful:" I used to think what profane mockery and hypocrisy it all was. How I was ashamed of myself, when I considered what people must think of me, while I was reading such prayers, and leading such a life!—But in nothing was I more disgusted with myself, than by the frequent petitions I was obliged to make use of for the grace and influence, and inspiration of God's Holy Spirit; especially while I used to hear many of the clergy, who

were no better than myself, ridicule every idea of divine influences; and when I also had in the bundle of my sermons, that I had either bought, borrowed, or begged, three that were designed to expose such pretensions to divine operations as being nothing better than downright enthusiasm. In short, sir, I could neither bear my office, nor bear myself on account of my office; and no one can tell, what I used to feel, when I was under the necessity of administering the sacrament, and how I used to dread and hate the return of those days, when I had to repeat these words, "the remembrance of our sins is grievous unto us, and the burden of them is intolerable:" my conscience would tell me, that I was uttering before God, an *intolerable lie*, and was about to take the sacrament with this abominable lie in my mouth. Then again, I was forcibly struck after the administration, while I was obliged to use these words; "And here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls, and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto thee;" that directly after I had been receiving the sacrament, I repeated the crime by mocking God with another lie; for that I knew in my conscience, I had no design whatever to devote myself to the glory of God, but to continue the same loose, wild way of living as before.

Loveg. It is really astonishing, that we can mock God by repeating such solemn words, and even on a sacramental occasion! But had you many who came to the sacrament?

Mer. Very few, sir; very few indeed: and when I used to see some of these grave old people come with their Week's Preparation books, I wondered what they could think of me, who had been running after all the vain amusements within my reach throughout all the week: if they had any reflection, I am sure they must have concluded that I was nothing better than a mere *hireling* and a *wolf*.

Loveg. How did you use to feel when you were called to visit the sick?

Mer. Ah, sir! it was but seldom that the people thought it worth their while to send after such a giddy, dissipated youth as I then was. On these occasions they naturally concluded, that prayers, merely said from the lips of such a light, frothy chap, could be of little avail in the solemn moments of their dissolution. But whenever I had an office of that sort to perform, no one can tell how I abhorred the task. However, I used to take out my *little black service-book*, read a few prayers over as fast as I could, and then off again to my sports. I remember once, I had the misfortune to be called to this office from the card table; I accordingly put the deal in my pocket, and went to my hated task; and while I was taking out my book and my handkerchief, all over perfume, to prevent the offensive smell of a sick chamber, (for I had a deal of affected delicacy about me,) I whisked out all the cards, while the nurse had to pick them up again—and then I went to my devotions!

Wor. It is a great mercy, that the wickedness and enmity of your heart did not prevent your giving a serious hearing to Mr. Lovegood, when he preached the visitation sermon.

Mer. Sir, in all my levity and wickedness, while I could join with others in skits and jokes against real religion; yet I had a sort of secret respect for those who were truly serious and consistent: I was convinced their characters were preferable to mine. My principal mischief arose from a light, trifling, and frothy spirit, by which I was entirely captivated; till my heart, I trust, was instructed to know somewhat of the grace of God in truth.

Loveg. Well, I bless God, being of a more studious turn of mind, I was kept from the same excess of

vanity; nor could I bear the company of the more dissolute of the rest of our body: but if more decent I was not less ignorant of the way of salvation revealed in the Bible, than yourself; and in our neighbourhood there lived another clergyman, known by the name of Mr. Soberman, who was very correct and chaste in the whole of his deportment: we still keep up a very friendly intercourse with each other; though he always told me I had gone too far. I am satisfied of this; we should ever speak well of good wherever we find it; and I should be happy, if in every country, and in every line of life, men of such characters were more universally to be found. It would be horrid indeed, if all the clergy were equally dissolute and profane.

Mer. O sir! it fell to my lot to be acquainted with a sad example of the worst men of every character. Some of these were professed libertine Deists: and among the clergy themselves I found some Deists in disguise. But what can be expected from the church under present circumstances? You know, sir, at the time of our public ordinations, near the Universities, what scenes are exhibited, when a set of such thoughtless youths take upon them this most sacred office. If the world knew half our tricks, how they would hate us for our hypocrisy, and how should we be treated as imposers on the credulity of mankind.

Wor. I confess, all who truly love the church, cannot but lament how ill she is served. But what was it that so impressed your mind, while you heard Mr. Lovegood preach his visitation sermon?*

Mer. Why, sir, when we heard that Mr. Lovegood was to be the preacher, as we had been informed of his character before, we were all attention; some

* It is the general custom, that some new Rector or Vicar lately inducted should preach the Visitation sermon.

out of envy, and others out of curiosity, and a few perhaps out of good will. But as I so hated myself, on account of my office, I thought I had no right to blame others, whose lives were more consistent than my own; so I confess, I attended not only without any prejudice, but rather with a strong prepossession upon my mind, that I should hear somewhat, well worthy of my attention; for I was persuaded Mr. Lovegood was a much better man than myself.

Loveg. [To Mr. Worthy.] Sir, as we have done tea, if I am to be made the subject of conversation, I shall withdraw and desire Edward to take away his tea equipage, and sit a little while with poor Mrs. Chipman. I wish to put these few sheets into her hands, [he reads the title page] “The Tempestuous Soul calmed by Jesus Christ.”

Mr. Lovegood having thus withdrawn, the present dialogue shall be concluded, that the reader’s attention may have time to rest before he hears more of Mr. Merryman, and of the gracious influences of the gospel; which wrought so wonderfully on his mind, and which produced such pleasing consequences on his ministry, and on the whole of his life and conversation.

DIALOGUE XIX.

THE CHARACTER OF THREE SORTS OF MINISTERS, REPRESENTED IN CONTRAST WITH EACH OTHER.

MR. WORTHY AND FAMILY; MR. LOVEGOOD, AND MR. MERRYMAN.

BEFORE Mr. Merryman favours us with a farther narration on the subject of his experience, perhaps it might not be unacceptable to my readers, were they to be advertised, that there were two other ministers in the same neighbourhood, of names nearly similar to that of Slapdash before mentioned, Mr. Slopdash, and Mr. Taplash. The character of Mr. Slapdash has sufficiently appeared from the preceding dialogue. Mr. Slopdash would frequently boast that he was of the same family with Mr. Slapdash; but, by all accounts, the relationship was very distant indeed. It is charitably hoped that Mr. Slopdash was a good man. But while Mr. Slapdash had a mind warm and animated, the other was vehement and rash, and would insult his hearers with gross personal reflections, which were too frequently administered with great indiscretion; and this he called *faithfulness*. Mr. Slapdash could also give hard *slaps* when needed, but, in general, they were administered with discretion; and if at any time, through the natural rapidity of his constitution, he failed, yet being pos-

sessed of the "meekness and gentleness that was in Christ," his mistakes were soon corrected; if at times he tripped through the rapidity of his mind, he never fell into the mire through the prevailing impurity of his heart.

Mr. Slopdash had a mind that was naturally low, vulgar, and coarse. The sentiments of Mr. Slapdash, on the contrary, were elevated and pure. If ever he descended, it was like the swallow, just to dip the tip of his wings in the stream, and again ascend. But Mr. Slopdash was quite the duck; he could go down into the filthy kennel of human corruption, and turn it up from the very bottom, and then glory in his performance. Mr. Slapdash, after he had taken his text, would for awhile stick to it; and give it a very just and correct interpretation, though afterwards, from the warm and animated frame of his mind, he would branch out so as to surprise his hearers, by a brilliancy of thought, peculiar to himself. His severer hearers would blame him for these eccentricities, and call him a rambling preacher; though still he was correct in his divinity, and well-intentioned in his design; and in all his ramblings he was ever sure to *keep upon holy ground*.

Mr. Slopdash, on the contrary, when he had taken a text, would not so much consider its *sense*, as its *sound*; and would conceive himself wonderfully clever if he could hit upon a meaning, the most preposterous and absurd, by way of explaining a passage the most perspicuous and plain. He once vociferated for an hour on this text: "Behold, says Pharaoh's baker, I had three white baskets on my head," Gen. xl. 16; and from hence he proved the doctrine of the Trinity, whereby he astonished his auditory not a little, and pleased them hugely; for they never heard before, that the three baskets meant the three persons in the Trinity!!!

He also proved nearly the same doctrine from the history of Esther; that Ahasuerus was God the Father, that Mordecai was God the Son, that Esther was the Church, and that Haman was the Devil. As to myself, I rather doubt the justice of the interpretation: for, if we abide by it, that the devil was hung, upwards of two thousand three hundred years ago, (though he certainly deserved it,) it is impossible to suppose that such a wonderful deal of mischief could have been done ever since, by a *dead devil*. While it is not less surprising that upwards of five hundred years after his execution, he should have been represented by Paul as being all alive, and full of activity, going about seeking whom he may devour. It is, however, charitably to be concluded, that the defects of Mr. Slopdash were not in his heart, but in his head. His brains were unfortunately very *ill-screwed* together, though had they been screwed too close, certainly many of his floating ideas would have been terribly *cramped*; but as it happened, matters with him were in a very contrary extreme. No wonder, therefore, that this shatter-brained divine, should by the rattling and lax state of his tongue, evidence so strongly, the loose state of his brains. Mr. Slopdash was driven, with others of the same mind, into this wild way of interpreting the Scriptures, not only in the above instances, but in a variety of others, equally as absurd, from having admitted too slight notions of the necessity of the practical and preceptive part of the Word of God. Hence he had almost run into the abominable idea, urged by some *Ranters* of late and modern times; that "the law is no rule of life to a believer;" but his mind was not altogether so vitiated as to admit a doctrine, so grossly blasphemous against the holiness of God. He appears evidently vindicated from this charge, even from the fanciful, absurd interpretation he gave of the

following text: "He that loveth pleasure, shall be a poor man; he that loveth wine and oil, shall not be rich." Having thrown aside the common-sense interpretation of the passage, as directing us to avoid sinful pleasures and extravagant indulgences, he insisted upon it, that the pleasure there meant, was the pleasure of true godliness, and that being a poor man was to be understood as being "poor in spirit;" and that loving wine and oil, was to represent our loving the spiritual blessings of the gospel, and that such people should not be rich in their own esteem.—Such was the *spiritual nonsense* that flowed in large abundance, from the *pate* of this shatter-brained divine.

However there was another Mr. Slopdash, not far distant, a base-born offspring of the same family, equally as ignorant, but of a much worse disposition: with him neither Mr. Lovegood nor Mr. Merryman could keep up the least possible connexion, as his doctrine had, at all times, a secret tendency to prove his hatred to holiness; and his life was no better than his doctrine, while his spirit and temper were as bitter as wormwood and gall. This, therefore, rendered him a very dangerous preacher indeed, for while he pretended to be such a stanch friend to the doctrine of Christ, he was a dangerous enemy to the mind of Christ, while many were found, being as ignorant as himself, eagerly to swallow down his insulting dogmas, as if they were consistent with those pure and holy truths which are revealed in the Word of God.

He once exemplified his horrid art in thus perverting the scriptures, while he made a preachment from these words: "Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." He actually misconstrued this holy word of caution, or rather prophecy, given by our Lord to his presumptuous disciple Peter, into an express command, "Thou *shalt* deny me;" and thus proved that the law could not be a rule of life to a believer!!!

I was told also, on another occasion, he exhibited on this text: "It is better to dwell in a corner of the house top, than with a brawling woman in a wide house." First, he insisted upon it, that the Proverbs are not to be considered in a *moral*, but a *gospel* point of view.—That the *brawling woman* was the Law; and that dwelling in the corner of the house, meant being shut up in the Church: and there the Law could not *brawl* at us, as all in the Church were in a justified state; but they who were living in the *wide house*, he represented as living in the wide house of the world, and that they would hear the *brawlings* of the law, *scolding* them for their wickedness. So that *this* Mr. Slopdash had no idea of the wickedness he was guilty of, in giving such a view of the just and holy law, by comparing its most righteous sentence against our unrighteousness, to the *brawling* of an angry woman. From the same bad principle, this same Mr. Slopdash would also insult the minds of all chaster hearers of the Gospel, by telling them that we should not perplex the souls of the elect, by preaching up more holiness than God designed they should possess; because "sin could do the believer no harm," and that when the apostle said, "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," he meant without Christ no man shall see the Lord, which is a solemn truth, though designed by him to cover a most vile antinomian conclusion against the necessity of personal holiness on the souls of men.

If I have not already exhausted the reader's patience, he shall have some farther evidence how this man could pervert the wise book of Proverbs, into language the most preposterous and absurd; for thus it seems he was in the habit of interpreting what Solomon says of the four things that disquiet the earth: "A servant when he reigneth;" that is, said he, when we who once were the servants, slaves to

the law, reign with Christ. "A fool when he is filled with meat," which he interpreted as meaning, when we fools are filled with their sort of heavenly food. Perhaps it would have suited as well had he said that he meant himself, when his gaping admirers gave him a good dinner for talking nonsense. "An odious woman when she is married," he says, was designed to represent the marriage of the odious sinner to Christ; and "A hand-maid, when she is heir to her mistress," was to mean how we sinners are made heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ!!! spiced with their *indirect* meaning of the passage, that though the devil may reign in our hearts on earth, we may reign with him in heaven. I am satisfied, after all these instances from the above said Mr. Slopdash, respecting his method of interpreting the scriptures, he will be quite contented if I suppress others, some of them being even indecent, and all of them as absurd and preposterous as any of the former. And indeed the other Mr. Slopdash, who was known to Mr. Lovegood, soon tried his patience till it was quite exhausted; while Mr. Merryman, for a long time attempted to convince him of the impropriety and absurdity of such interpretations of Scripture. But as there is a certain degree of pride and positivity belonging to the whole of that tribe, all Mr. Merryman got, was the pity of Mr. Slopdash, who always conceited his own ignorance was superlative wisdom, and that the wisdom of others, was to be imputed to their ignorance.

Through the sides of Mr. Slopdash, however, the Rev. Mr. Taplash, minister of a little, gay, gossiping town in that neighbourhood, called Clack, would make his most vehement attacks against Mr. Slapdash; and indeed, against every other minister who, with unaffected simplicity, and godly sincerity, preached the gospel to the consciences of his hearers. These he

would charge as being all alike, supposing that the follies of some were equally imputable to all; and though he was a man of no great consequence or worth, but in his own esteem, yet where truths are naturally disliked, any sort of a witness will be readily admitted against them.

Elegance of composition, and a genteel delivery, were all that Mr. Taplash could admire, which he thought were wonderfully accomplished in himself, while he was dealing with all possible affectation, his flimsy, flippery, unsentimental harangues, as a very acceptable treat, to those who could be gratified with empty sounds, and a mere parade of words.

The Orator, when he first made his appearance, would be primmed and dressed up in the most finished style: not a hair would be found out of place on his empty *pate*, on which the barber had been exercising his occupation all the Sunday morning, and powdered till as white as the driven snow. Thus elegantly decorated, and smelling like a civet-cat, through an abundance of perfumery, he would scent the air as he passed. Then, with a most conceited skip, he would step into the pulpit, as though stepping out of a band-box; and here he had not only to display his elegant production, but his elegant self also; his delicate white hand, exhibiting his diamond ring, while his richly-scented white handkerchief was unfurled, and managed with remarkable dexterity and art. His smelling-bottle was next occasionally presented to his nose, giving different opportunities to display his sparkling ring. Thus having adjusted the *important* business of the handkerchief and the smelling-bottle, he had next to take out his glass, that he might reconnoitre the *fair* part of his auditory, with whom he might have been gallanting, and entertaining with his cheap talk, the day before: and these, as soon as he could catch their eye, he

would favour with a simpering look, and a graceful nod.

Then next to his *devotions*. These were performed in a remarkably *gentleman-like* manner; though the best of it was, that they were no sooner begun than they were ended. The same may also be said of his sermons, they were special short, fifteen minutes being the full length of the sermon of a fashionable divine; and this he rarely exceeded: while the ingredients of all his compositions, seemed to be nothing better than flimsy declamations, and religious compliments. He would be talking of "the reward we were to receive from the fair hand of our own virtuous conduct, which, at a very easy rate, we might secure to ourselves, as our religion by no means secluded us from innocent amusements:" (doubtless referring to the card-table, the ball-room, the theatre, &c.)—"which we were all permitted to enjoy, in order that we might return to the service of our Maker with a greater relish and delight: and it is reported, that he once actually composed a prayer for a *religious* young lady, on her confirmation, after she had discharged her godfathers and godmothers, from that vow on her behalf; "to renounce the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh!" which she was to say after her return from these exhibitions of vanity and pride.

Mr. Taplash would also, at times, adorn his harangues with scraps of poetry, principally culled out of Shakspeare's plays; and at one time, after a very tasty specimen of his elocution, in which he had been displaying the rich repast conscious virtue brought home to the pious mind, he thus concluded, with the following verse out of Thomson:

"Come then, expressive silence, muse *her* praise."

The orator stood, as all-astonished at the excellency

of his own harangue; gave a very elegant *congé* to his auditory, and then most gracefully sat down.

But the circumstance which flattered his vanity, beyond all others, was that of his being appointed as the preacher at the consecration of a church, to which a public charity was connected; and on which occasion he flourished away in this most extraordinary manner:—

“Such is the foundation of a temple truly Christian. Let us gratify the mental eye with a transient survey of the figurative superstructure. I look up with admiration at the broad expansive arch of charity; the massy columns of truth; the graceful capitals of mercy, gentleness, and compassion; the whole compactly cemented by piety and philanthropy, by a cement of goodness and love, intimately blended and tempered in a perfect, inseparable amalgamation. If it be asked of what architectural order is the fabric? it is neither the Tuscan, the Doric, the Ionic, nor the Corinthian, but it is the composite Christian order; more beautiful in its form, and more durable in its materials, than the most celebrated productions of classic antiquity, modelled in the polite schools of Athens or of Rome; and is finished with a *grace* which they could only, at a distant interval, faintly and imperfectly conceive.”*

A text of Scripture, or even the name of Christ, could scarcely ever find admission into the sermons of Mr. Taplash. In one of his fine moral harangues, descanting upon the beauties of virtue, and the excellencies of a virtuous life, he thus addressed his auditory, in a sentiment he had gathered from a heathen orator: “Virtue, thou fairest of names,

* Such was the fanciful nonsense that appeared in print from the pen of a very learned man, about this time, but I forbear to mention names.

whose enchanting power can sooth even the savage breast! Virtue, I say, couldst thou come down, dressed in human shape, and in all thy beauteous array, surely thy godlike appearance would win the foulest heart, and all the world would at once adore thee as a goddess supremely blessed, and in themselves also, not less supremely blessed, when graced with the influences of thy most tender and transporting charms. O! thou goddess, divinely glorious, descend, and let us see thy lovely features, that we may all adore!"

At once the buzz of universal applause was heard throughout the congregation, as a most grateful incense, offered up to feast the pride and vanity of the preacher, by way of return, for the flattery of the same vile passions, he had so plentifully bestowed on his hearers. But soon afterwards, this very fine speech, delivered with such elegance, unfortunately met with a terrible mishap; for a gentleman of property asked Mr. Taplash to lend his pulpit to old Mr. Blunt, a worthy clergyman in that neighbourhood, which he could not well refuse, though much against the grain. He, having been informed of this fine speech, quoted it almost verbatim, as it was delivered, then added, "Virtue did once descend in human form, dressed in the person of God, our holy Redeemer, and adorned in the perfection of excellence. And did the world admire him for the beauties of holiness, or adore him for his lovely charms? Just the reverse. Was he not hated because he was lovely? And was not the cry against him, "Away with him, crucify him, crucify him?" And did they cease their vindictive cry till they had put him to death, even the ignominious death of the cross?" Never was Mr. Taplash's smelling-bottle so much needed as upon this occasion; and he used it very plentifully, while his *pretty* countenance at once red-

dened like the rose ; nor could the auditory tell what they could think of themselves, that they could be so led away by the weak harangues of Mr. Taplash, which were so easily refuted by the sound sense of Mr. Blunt.*

If ever Mr. Taplash appeared a little more than commonly warmed and animated, it was when he was preaching against fanatics and modern enthusiasts. On these occasions, he would be always decanting on the powers of reason, which he would dress up as another of his goddesses ; that the Almighty had given her sufficient powers for the reformation of mankind ; or if she should fail, conscience would be called in to lend her aid, whom he would call “the sacred monitor of the Deity—the vicegerent of the Almighty in the human bosom—the mirror of merit, from whence we receive the conscious reward of every virtuous action.” Such would be some of his fulsome compliments to the corrupted heart of man, and such was the style of this wretched fribble in a cassock.

And now the reader shall be left to determine whether of the two is the more disgusting ; the ignorance and vulgarity of Mr. Slopdash, or the conceitedness, pedantry, and puppyism of the genteel and elegant Mr. Taplash. Having thus presented these characters before the reader, the dialogue shall be now continued, after the departure of Mr. Lovegood.

Worthy. Well, Mr. Merryman, as Mr. Lovegood is withdrawn, you may speak with the more freedom. How that good man hates praise, though no person upon earth so well deserves it!

Merryman. Why, sir, the very style in which he

* What is here related actually took place at Edinburgh, not many years ago.

mentioned his text at the visitation, struck me not a little. You know in what a grave and solemn manner he always reads the word of God. I remember the text, "Watch thou in all things; do the work of an evangelist; make full proof of thy ministry." On that occasion, he wisely judged it might be most advisable to read his sermon; though I always like him best when he preaches from the fulness of his own heart; but he knew that extempore sermons are sure to give offence to the clergy, especially in their present state. That sermon he afterwards lent me for my private perusal; and what a sermon it was! What a contrast he displayed between the carnal ministers of the world, who neither know their Lord's voice, nor seek to know it, and the spiritual and faithful ministers of the gospel, as delineated in the word of God!

Wor. Directly as I began to read my Bible, I was at once convinced, that the spirit and temper of real Christianity, were as opposite to the spirit of the world, as light is to darkness. And when that poor, dissipated creature, Lord Rakish, gave me a call one morning, and happened to find Mr. Lovegood with me, I remember his grand objection against the Bible was, that it was impossible for *human nature* to come up to it. I well recollect Mr. Lovegood's admirable answer: "So your lordship settles the matter, not by force of argument, but from what you *feel* in yourself: the Bible must be wrong because you *feel* wrong." Immediately Lord Rakish said, "Why, do you not think I should like to believe the Bible if I could, as well as yourself?" Mr. Lovegood directly answered, "Pardon me, my Lord, if I deny it; you and thousands more besides, love sin too well to believe the Bible."

Mer. What an excellent remark! But this was nearly the same application he made in his visita-

tion sermon. That it was utterly impossible the carnal world could love the holiness and spirituality which existed in the real Christian; as by the whole tenor of his conduct, he appeared a living witness against them who "have a name to live and are dead;" while all Christ's real disciples "are not of the world, for that God hath chosen them out of the world, therefore the world hateth them." That consequently, as far as the real ministers of Christ follow the example of their holy Master, in life and doctrine, they also must suffer the reproach of the world with their suffering Redeemer. And, that therefore, his first apostles positively declared, "that all they who live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution;" and that "*living godly in Christ Jesus*," would ever draw down odium and persecution, at least of the tongue, (however, through divine providence, religion was protected by law,) where its real influences were not established in the heart; and that we should find it so, if we made full proof of our ministry, or attended according to the directions given in the ordination office. "To be messengers, watchmen, and stewards of the Lord; to teach and premonish, to feed and provide for the Lord's family; to seek Christ's sheep who are dispersed abroad; and for his children, who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ, for ever:" and after he had given a large quotation from that most excellent exhortation, I well remember the contemptuous sneer that passed on that occasion, between Mr. Spiteful and old Rector Guzzle.

Wor. No wonder at their sneers. We all know the spirit and temper of Mr. Spiteful: and as for Rector Guzzle, I never heard him famed for any thing, but that he was a greater eater, and harder drinker than any man about the country. But I thought, after I had read the sermon, Mr. Lovegood

was the most striking on that passage, "Do the work of an evangelist."

Mer. Indeed, sir, I had no conception at first that there could be any other evangelists than the writers of the four Gospels.

Wor. But he gave us all to understand, that the work of an evangelist, is to spread the Gospel. And in what a full and concise manner he described the leading sentiments of the Gospel preacher!

Mer. I remember well his weighty observations on the importance of the ministry; and I felt every word as against myself, for my presumption and wickedness, in taking upon me such an office, and from such motives, while I was so perfectly careless; living like a downright heathen, and yet daring to assume the character of the minister of Christ. What strong expressions he made use of, when calculating the infinite value of but one immortal spirit! That "all the vast revolutions of kingdoms and empires, were but for a time; the wide-extended splendour of the greatest of them, as once they existed, is now no more: not so the soul of the meanest individual: being of infinite duration, it is of infinite worth;" urging from this, that our doctrine should be the most pure, our example the most holy, and our diligence the most assiduous and persevering.

Wor. Do you recollect how he urged that part of the text, "Watch thou in all things?"

Mer. Yes, I recollect enough to have convinced me, and many others, if they could have attended to it, that our careless lives, and sacred office, were the greatest contradiction to each other, and in entire opposition to the word of God, which directs us to "be instant in season, and out of season;" to "make full proof of our ministry;" in short, "to spend and be spent for Jesus Christ;" while at the same time, the negligence of the generality of us, was so evident

and notorious. But what striking observations he made on those words, "Endure afflictions!" He at once met the objection he supposed would be made, that this part of the text must be confined to primitive times only; and that now the profession of Christianity, since its establishment, was "attended with ease and honour."* But I remember with what solemnity, he asked the question, "Is the carnal mind otherwise now, than it was then,—Enmity against God? Could age cure the diseases of the human heart, which is described as being "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked?" No wonder, therefore, if in every age we exemplified the justice of the charge, that we are *haters of God*; and what could be expected from such, but that they should be *haters of the godly*? I remember he farther pressed the point, by first quoting the beatitudes, as in the fifth of Matthew; observing what a fine epitome it was of the mind of Christ, as it dwells in the heart of every true believer. That the real Christian was poor in spirit; and that such only are of the kingdom of heaven; that he was a holy mourner, under a sense of sin; and that such alone should be comforted; that he is found among the meek, and that these only inherit the earth, and heaven too: that they hungered and thirsted after righteousness, or rather after a holy conformity to the will of God: that he was merciful; therefore should obtain mercy: that he was pure in heart; therefore should see God: that he was a peacemaker, and therefore should be numbered among the

* An expression of the late Bishop Warburton, when in the exertion of his zeal against modern enthusiasts. Though a Bishop of a church which so repeatedly insists on divine influences, yet, like many others, he entirely denied all divine influences whatever; thus he completely reduced Christianity to a system of deism, or of natural religion, as it is called, while he pretended to vindicate her sacred cause.

children of God. He then made the comparison between the high spirituality which belongs to the real disciples of Christ, and the poor, cold morality so much talked of, though, after all, so little practised among the people of the world. Then he mentioned a variety of passages of the same import and concluded with this text: "whatsoever ye do, in word and deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."

Mer. Till that hour, I never had the most distant conception what was meant by gospel holiness, any more than the horse I rode on to the visitation. But I am sure all that he spoke respecting the impurity and unholiness of mankind in general, was true, and indeed, of all as in a state of nature. I have already seen a great deal too much, though yet so young; and I have had proof enough, that what the Bible says is true, "that the whole world lieth in the wicked one." Almost all I have ever met with, have been nearly of the same stamp, following what their corrupted hearts evidently liked best; "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." I am sure all these were my delights, till I heard Mr. Lovegood.

Wor. But I remember, he has admirably showed how the evangelist, or evangelical minister, had also to expatiate on the glories of the Gospel, as manifested in our redemption by the blood of Christ, our acceptance in his righteousness, and the sanctification of our natures, by the operation of the Divine Spirit. I think our excellent friend crowded too many ideas into the same subject; but no wonder, as it was most evidently his design, to take that opportunity, to give the most comprehensive view of matters in his power. What he delivered, contained sufficient substance for many a large volume.

Mer. I really was no critic, while he was pouring down the substance of such volumes of divinity on my poor ignorant head, and wicked heart; yet nothing astonished me so much as my ignorance, excepting my presumption, while he took the opportunity, during the course of his sermon, to quote a variety of awful passages, against such a set of faithless hirelings. He produced several of them from the 34th of Ezekiel, which I never forgot from that hour to this. "Wo be to the shepherds of Israel, that feed themselves. Should not the shepherds feed the flock? The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick; neither have ye bound up that which was broken; neither have ye brought again that which was driven away; neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them, and they were scattered because there is no shepherd, and they became meat for all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered and none did search and seek after them. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I am against the shepherds, and will require my flock at their hands, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more, for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them." I remember at the same time, he introduced another passage from the same Prophet, as belonging to the watchmen of Israel: "When I say to the wicked, Thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him no warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand."

Wor. Yes, and there is another passage, which I remember to have read in his sermon, and which he quoted from Isaiah. "His watchmen are blind; they

are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs, which can never have enough; and they are shepherds that cannot understand; they all look to their own way, every one for his own gain from his quarter."

Mer. Yes, and how he set forth at the same time the dreadful words pronounced by our Lord, against the Scribes and Pharisees, the false teachers of the day, against all such "evil men and seducers, who are sure to wax worse and worse;" and who run counter to the express command of God. "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants, for Jesus' sake." And I well recollect what solemn countenances appeared among the laity, though afterwards he was so plentifully reprobated among some of the clergy, for having exposed them in such a manner before all the people.

Wor. He expose them! It had never been in the power of Mr. Lovegood, or any one else, to have exposed the clergy by such expressions, if they did not expose themselves by their improper conduct. It was, however, enough to make the ears of them that heard it to tingle.

Mer. But the observation he made on the last clause of his text, struck me, if possible, more forcibly than any of the former. Cannot you remember, sir, what weighty remarks he made on that passage in the text, "Make full proof of thy ministry;" how admirably he described the important duties of the ministerial office, and that we were commanded to "give ourselves wholly to it, that our profiting might appear unto all men?" Then he asked how the man of fashion, as he is called, who was only known to be a minister by the colour of his coat; the covetous and voluptuous, the negligent, and the proud, could

dare to register themselves among the ministers of a crucified Redeemer. And that when it was the bounden duty of every private Christian, "to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure," and even "to work out his salvation with fear and trembling," what must the people think, when they see these ministers so much the reverse of what they themselves are commanded to be, according to the common standard of Christianity?" Then he quoted that passage from St. Peter, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." I think I now see him as he was then in the pulpit; he stopped, and made a solemn pause, then added: "Holy brethren, such we are in office, and such we should be before God and man; 'what manner of persons ought we then to be, in all holy conversation and godliness,' to be the leaders and instructors of a people, so sacred in themselves, and so highly devoted to God."

Wor. I don't remember reading that passage in the sermon, but he told me, while he was delivering it, some texts from the Scriptures struck him so forcibly, that he introduced them, and gave a short comment upon them; and this made him preach a quarter of an hour longer than he designed.

Mer. Yes, I heard enough of the length of his sermon, though I bless God it was not long to me. The whole of it was but just an hour. But the ridicule of almost all the clergy, both as it respected the length of his sermon, and the holy warmth with which it was delivered, shocked me exceedingly.

Wor. Ah, sir, had they been at a play-house, instead of a Church, neither the length of the play, nor the pathos of the actors, would have given them the least offence. The actor is allowed to represent ima-

ginary things as though they were real; while the minister of the truths of God, is to be stigmatized as a madman, unless he represents real things as though they were imaginary.

Mer. Well, sir, and I do not suppose you thought your worthy minister to blame, in going a little beyond the limits he designed, in making some additions to the written sermon he composed for the visitation. For though I admire the tenderness of his mind, not to give offence when it possibly can be avoided, by writing his sermon, as the truths he then delivered would be deemed sufficiently offensive among those who heard them; yet I cannot conceive why speaking extempore from the pulpit, should give more offence than at the bar, or in the senate, or in any other public assembly.

Wor. If indeed it be required of a minister that he should be "apt to teach," why should we not expect at least as much from a public pleader in the cause of religion, as a public pleader at the bar? The offence, therefore, taken at what is called extempore preaching, I suppose is *principally* found to be among those who are exposed thereby, for undertaking an office they are so ill-qualified to fill; though I would speak with caution, as I by no means suppose, that every minister is altogether unfit for his office, who cannot speak extempore.

Mer. Well, I found I was in a measure obliged to commence an extempore preacher, before ever I designed it; for as soon as I became serious, none of my old sermons would do for me any longer; nor were there any to be bought that would afterwards suit my taste: and my mind was so occupied, after hearing Mr. Lovegood, that I was quite unfit to sit down to compose any thing like a regular sermon; so having written some thoughts as they occurred to my mind,

I explained them as well as I could from my notes, according to the feelings of my heart.

Wor. But what was the effect of the visitation sermon, after you came from church, and attended with your brethren at the dinner?

Mer. Sir, I was exceedingly shocked at the profane ridicule which took place against Mr. Lovegood almost from every quarter; and some of them came up to me, supposing that I should join with them; but I was so ashamed of myself that I turned my head another way and dropped a tear; while Mr. Lovegood, Mr. Godliman, and poor old Mr. Meek, collected together in one corner of the room to keep each other in countenance. I was heartily glad, however, to see in the midst of all his contempt, old Dr. Orderly, and Mr. Sedate his curate, come up to him, and shake him by the hand, and thank him for his sermon. Observing, that, though perhaps he could not entirely agree with him in all points of divinity; yet that he had shown a necessary and well-timed zeal against the loose and improper conduct of too many of their brethren. This gave me encouragement to follow his example. And when I told him, that one of the most dissipated and negligent of the same order begged to follow the doctor's example, in thanking him, from the bottom of my heart, for the just rebuke I had received from his lips; and prayed that God would give me grace to remember it to my dying moments, a tear began starting from my eye, which I could not suppress, while Mr. Lovegood, Mr. Godliman, and Mr. Meek had enough to do to stifle the feelings of their minds at the same time. As to Mr. Lovegood, he was much more overcome than myself: we went and stood together for a short time, by a window in the room, and very little could either of us say, while we mingled the sympathetic tear with each other, as subsisting be-

tween those who feel the joy of angels, when one poor sinner is brought to repentance unto life. A repentance which for the first time, I trust I then began to feel.

Wor. Had our invaluable friend preached nothing better than a sort of cold, formal, half-way sermon, he had not given half the offence, nor yet would he have done half the good: truth can best defend itself without the assistance of our low cunning, in attempting to make it palatable to the carnal mind. But the Bishop, it seems, was quite as much pleased with his sermon as Dr. Orderly.

Mer. I was very glad the Bishop took so much notice of him, though I heard that Rector Guzzle, and Mr. Topper, his curate, and Rector Fillpot, who sat close together, talking about nothing but good eating and drinking, afterwards did all they could to prejudice his lordship against him. It is reported when Rector Guzzle said, "You see, my lord, these modern preachers are all for grace:" the bishop replied, "It is to be lamented that the clergy, in general, have not more of that grace exhibited in their lives and conduct, which Mr. Lovegood has so well recommended to their notice." Though I believe he also agreed with Dr. Orderly, (who is much respected by the Bishop, and by every one else who knows him,) that Mr. Lovegood rather went a little too far.

Wor. Well, I confess I cannot see the good of that cold moderation which some admire. When the cause is of God, we cannot be too zealous in promoting it.

Mer. But zeal in such a cause, is sure to be charged as being the effect of madness. I heard of a near relation of mine, who has some preferment in Ireland, and who, but a little time ago, was quite as dissipated as myself, and is now as zealous for the

cause of God, as he once was for the cause of vanity and nonsense; when he was accused by one of his "false brethren" to the bishop, as not only being mad himself, but that he had *bitten* others of the clergy also; received for answer, that if that was madness, he hoped he would go on till he had *bitten* every clergyman in his diocess.

Wor. I rather wonder, that a great variety of objectors did not enter the list against Mr. Lovegood's faithful testimony on this occasion.

Mer. Oh, sir! there was Mr. Flippant, a young stripling just in orders; but he puts me too much in mind of myself; how he went skipping and prating about the room against Mr. Lovegood's sermon. He came and asked me, among others, if I had ever heard such a *ranting fool* before? I had sufficient courage to answer: "Oh, sir! I fear the charge of being *ranting fools*, may be more justly urged against us for our wickedness, than against Mr. Lovegood for his preaching.

Mrs. Wor. It is of very little consequence what such empty chaps have to say: but I suppose after this you soon became intimate with Mr. Lovegood.

Mer. Madam, I could not rest, as you may suppose, till I had an interview with him. Directly therefore, as he moved from the dinner, I followed him; my heart was so full that almost every word I spoke to him was intermixed with tears of contrition and remorse: while he, with the greatest affection, began to pour into my wounded conscience all the consolatory promises of the Gospel; observing, what a great mercy it was that I was now convinced of the folly and evil of my past life, and what a blessing this might prove to hundreds besides, if, by the grace of God, I continued in the same mind. When we parted, Mr. Lovegood affectionately invited me to see

him. As it unfortunately happened, I was engaged on a visit to Mr. Bluster, at Revel-Hall; Mr. Lovegood advised me to send my excuse, as I could now say, I was engaged on some concerns, which demanded my particular attention.—So the time I meant for Mr. Bluster, I passed with Mr. Lovegood.

Wor. It proved a very favourable event, that immediately as you found your need of an instructor, you at once had one at hand, so excellently well calculated for your purpose.

Mer. Indeed, sir, it was. For you must think what a situation I was in, when just emerging from my ignorance, a mere babe in Christ, and in spiritual knowledge, I found that I had to fill the place of a Father in divine knowledge; for such fathers, I apprehend, are the only fit instructors of the children of God.*

Wor. I fear there were very few who could properly be called the children of God, who needed your instruction in that parish, so that the difficulty could not be very considerable, while you had to instruct others still more ignorant than yourself.

Mer. True, sir. But then I was perfectly ignorant how I was to set about that *low* office of a spiritual instructor. But by passing the two days I designed for Mr. Bluster, with Mr. Lovegood, he gave me a clue

* It is probable that on this supposition the fears of Thomas Newman were excited, in Dialogue the 6th, lest Mr. Lovegood should be promoted from the vicarage of Brookfield to the Archbishopric of Canterbury, judging very rightly how well he deserved, not only the title of the *right* reverend, but even the *most* reverend Father in God, both from the rich experience of the Gospel on his own heart, and having also so many around him, who were his spiritual children, and over whom he acted in a manner so fatherly and so wise. Oh! that a Mr. Lovegood, independent of every political principle, may never be wanting to fill each vacant bishopric in our land.

for obtaining spiritual knowledge, which afterwards proved a wonderful advantage to me. He particularly advised me to read the first book of Homilies; to employ my time in modernizing the language, and then read them over as sermons, to my congregation.

Wor. Did you take the advice?

Mer. Sir, I have before told you I could think of nothing but myself, and my ignorance, directly as I began to examine myself by the new views which had been brought to my mind. And though I found the book of Homilies exceedingly instructive, and though I have loved the church of England ever since, as in this land she is certainly the pillar and ground of truth;* yet I rather chose to follow that part of Mr. Lovegood's advice, to attempt some instructive hints, as I read the lessons appointed for the public service, and when I got into the pulpit, I have before told you how I stammered out the truth as well as I could.

Wor. I should suppose this change wrought on your heart, was not a greater blessing to yourself, than a matter of astonishment to all the people at Sandover.

Mer. I bless God, many of my parishioners were not less affected than myself, when I began to tell them all, how grieved I was that I had been leading them wrong, both by my example and doctrine; and that now I hoped in God, that I should preach them better doctrine, and show them a better example;

* Mr. Merryman might not suppose from that observation, that no blemishes could be found which vindicated the conduct of others in their conscientious dissent from the established church, though he laments that there are any such dissenters to be found, as blame Mr. Merryman and others, for their conscientious conformity to a church, notwithstanding some defects, whose liturgy is so evangelical, and whose doctrines are so sound.

and while I was thus talking to the people, it is amazing how poor Sam Resolute, one of my former comrades, was affected. I was in hopes for some time, that his heart had been truly changed; but since then, he has awfully declined. I hope, however, he will yet be brought back; for I met with him the other day, after he had been at a horse race, and begged him to come into my house. He followed me like a criminal; I plucked up courage, and would go to prayer with him, and it is amazing how he wept, and with what contrition he mentioned his backsliding state.

Wor. People must have been filled with remarkable astonishment at such a change.

Mer. Why, sir, it was curious beyond expression, what strange reports fled about the country, concerning me. Some said, that the change was occasioned by dejection of spirits, from my having met with a heavy loss by gaming; others found out that I had been crossed in love; some said that I had seen my uncle's apparition, who died about six weeks before; and others thought it was the effect of a fall from my horse, when I was taken up for dead at Gambleton races, whereby my skull had been nearly fractured, and that now I was quite gone mad. In short, it was so currently reported, that I was mad, that young captain Sparkish, one of my former frothy companions, actually came over to see me, and inquired if it might not be advisable to consult a physician, to know what remedy might be necessary to heal the cracked skull I met with, on the horse-course.

Miss Wor. Why, sir, I should rather think it might have been supposed, your skull was quite as much cracked, when you were after every mad amusement, and when you pitied me and my sisters at Mr. Bluster's, that we were to be bred up in such a mopish manner, as that we were not to be

allowed to touch a card; and as you expressed yourself that my father would as soon see the devil come into the house as a dancing-master; but I am sure, what the grace of God has done upon your heart, has been a great blessing to me.

Mer. Why, madam, who could tell you I made such a speech as that? I confess, though I have frequently expressed my pity that Mr. Worthy should educate his daughters in such a mopish manner, as I then thought it; yet I do not think I ever said your father "would as soon see the devil in his house, as a dancing-master."

Wor. [To his daughter.] This you know, my dear, was a speech of Mr. Spiteful: and when he has it in his power to exemplify the spleen of his heart against any of the supporters of vital religion, he never thinks it a crime to exaggerate.

Miss Wor. But, sir, since you favoured me and my sisters with the present of Mrs. Hannah More's book on Female Education, we can very willingly give up the silly amusement of dancing and card-playing, for the sake of the rational instructions we receive in the room of them. I am sure, when I happened to be with the Miss Giddy's the other day, I was satisfied nobody need to envy them the privileges of their sort of education.

Mer. Indeed, my dear Miss Worthy, through the divine blessing, I now see how much it is to be lamented, that the young women of the present day are turned out from their different boarding-schools, such mere baubles and playthings, that they scarcely deserve to be esteemed as rational creatures; but I had no serious views of the evils of these things, till I became serious myself.

Wor. Yes, and when you were half a madman, and as thoughtless as you could be, you were then judged to be in your *sober* senses; but when you became

“*sober* and temperate in all things,” then you were supposed to be a madman. We never know the worth of our own minds, till such time as we are blessed with the grace and mind of Christ.

Mer. I am sure the Spirit of God, in his divine operation on the human mind, may well be described as “the Spirit of wisdom and understanding.” What a lovely sedateness, what pleasant calmness, are they possessed of who feel the restoration of “the kingdom of heaven within them;” which is beautifully described in the scripture, as being “righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost!”

Wor. Mr. Lovegood preached us two admirable sermons, a few Sundays ago, on that subject, “The peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds, through Jesus Christ.” But here is Edward coming; I suppose it is with a message from Mr. Lovegood.

Edw. Sir, will your honour want the best parlour when you come in? for a young gentleman and his lady in a one-horse chair, and a servant with them on horseback, stopt to read the poetry your honour had put over the door,* and have asked for a dish of tea; and say, if I can accommodate them, they had rather stop the evening with us, than go two miles farther to Mapleton.

Wor. O no, Edward, we shall be going home directly.

Edw. But I am afraid my accommodations are not good enough for them; for I am sure by their manner that they are real *gentlefolk*.

Mrs. Wor. Then you will find it still more easy to accommodate them. You have all things, though in a plain way, yet very clean and neat; and if they want any thing you have not got, send to Trusty, my housekeeper, and she will let you have it.

* See Dialogue XVII.

Wor. Well, we will leave a couple of the largest trout for your guests, and call on Mr. Lovegood; and we will go home and clear for your visitants.

Edw. Thank your honour and madam, for your kindness.

Wor. Farewell, Edward. But be sure and send if you want any thing.

DIALOGUE XX.

MR. WORTHY, MR. LOVELY, AND OTHERS.

THE CONTRAST; OR, CONJUGAL HAPPINESS, FOUNDED ON
CHASTITY, FIDELITY, AND AFFECTION.

EDWARD goes to Brookfield Hall on the following morning, after the arrival of his new guests, while the family were at breakfast, and begs to speak to Mr. Worthy. Edward is introduced.

Edw. Sir, your honour said that I must call on you if the gentleman and lady, who came to our house yesterday evening, wanted any thing. They want nothing but the liberty to walk in your honour's park; and they are so pleased with the situation, and so well contented with our plain way of accommodating them, that they mean to stop over Sunday; for I made bold to tell them, what a *wonderful fine man* we have for the minister of our Parish, and that it was he who made the verses your honour had put over the door; but I should be ashamed to put them in our pew.

Wor. Well, Edward, there will be no difficulty on that score, for though we are pretty well crowded with Mr. Considerate's family and our own, yet my daughters can sit with Mrs. Lovegood, and then we shall have room for them.

Mrs. Wor. But do you want any thing for their accommodation?

Edw. Nothing, madam, but Mrs. Trusty's receipt,

with your leave, to make some jellies; the lady is in a very poor state of health, and he is so tender of her! They seem to be a most loving pair.—Poor Mrs. Chipman! the sight of it quite cuts her to the heart; she is always saying she might have been as happy as they are, if it had not been for her own folly, and the evil consequences of sin.

Mrs. Wor. Trusty shall send some jellies to your house directly.

Wor. Perhaps a little fruit also may be acceptable?

Edw. Why, the lady was asking if we had any, and we gathered some cherries and strawberries for them; but it is not in our way to raise such dainties as your honour has at the Hall.

Wor. I shall tell the gardener to send them a basket of fruit, and I shall call on you to-morrow, and invite them to tea.

Edw. Thank your honour. The dear gentleman, (and I am sure by his kind and good behaviour, he must be some downright gentleman;) he thinks about nothing but his wife: she is very sickly, and he is sadly afraid he will lose her.

Wor. I hope it is not another Sir Charles and Lady Dash's story.

Edw. O, sir! their behaviour is so different, it cannot be:—I am sure it cannot be.

Wor. Have you learnt the gentleman's name?

Edw. Why, sir, when their servant sat down to supper with us, I made bold to ask him.—His name is Lovely. He came from a place called Fairfield, near Grediton. It is amazing what a character the man gives his master and mistress, and what an affecting story he tells about them: I think there have been nothing but affecting stories at our house of late; *as how* he married against the consent of his rich uncle; and that he is very angry with him: but I can scarcely tell your honour *the rights of it*.

[On the next day Mr. Worthy accomplished his hospitable design: the first introductory tea-table conversation being not of sufficient importance to be narrated, shall be omitted. After tea, as the weather proved lowering, Mrs. Lovely continued the guest of Mrs. Worthy, while Mr. Worthy and Mr. Lovely took a short walk about the gardens: and when seated in the green-house, the following conversation took place.]

Wor. I am afraid, sir, you meet with very plain accommodations at the Golden Lion, though I am satisfied the worthy landlord and his wife will, according to the best of their ability, make you as comfortable as they can in their homely way.

Lov. O, sir! nothing can delight us more than our present accommodations. As we passed by we stopt to read the poetry; and it struck us so exceedingly, that we thought we would gratify our curiosity by going into the house. We called for tea, and were so astonishingly pleased with the neat and decent appearance of matters, that we at once determined to stop short of Mapleton, where we intended to have slept. Besides, we were so struck with the enchanting scenery from the lovely situation of the village, the neighbourhood being so beautifully dressed by the taste you have displayed about your own house and pleasure-grounds, that we next determined to continue, at least, a few days in our present quarters.

Wor. Have you a long journey then before you, sir?

Lov. Oh no, sir! I am only taking easy journeys from place to place, by the advice of our physician, to see if any thing can be done for the recovery of the health and spirits of that invaluable creature, who has been my wife for about these six months. We are under peculiar embarrassments, [he hesitates and wipes his eyes, then adds,] my relations, some of

whom are very affluent, are exceedingly displeased at the marriage, and I am afraid lest I should lose the best of wives by the affliction.

Wor. I know, sir, how indelicate it is to ask you questions of this sort, as it seems almost bordering upon impertinence; but may I suppose your only crime has been, that you were captivated by a very amiable young woman, whose birth and education were inferior to your own.

Lov. O, sir! no apology is needed; and our minds have suffered so severely by this event, that it will be a great indulgence to me, especially as I have taken the liberty to inquire so much into your character since I have been here, if you will allow me to be more particular.

Wor. We cannot well leave our present retreat, as it begins to rain; and whatever you communicate shall be in confidence.

Lov. Oh no, sir! no confidence is necessary. The part my dearest wife and I have acted, may be published in every newspaper throughout the kingdom, and it will never put us to the blush.

Wor. Sir, after such a declaration of your honourable conduct, I cannot be less anxious to hear your story, than you are to relate it.

Lov. Sir, before you can fully understand matters I must first give you a short history of our family connexions. My father has a small hereditary estate, which clears him between five and six hundred a year, and that he might increase his fortune, he engaged with others in a large brewery. He married a Miss Greedy, whose family is very rich, but as it is the scheme of that family, like many others, to hoard up all for the eldest son, her fortune was nothing greater than my father had a right to expect, it being only three thousand pounds. By that marriage my father had five children; my younger brother died almost an

infant. So that our family at present consists of myself and three sisters; two of these are creditably married, and for this they have to thank my father, who being a person of strict integrity, never saw it just to make such a vast difference between his children: and having thus, by care and attention, portioned off my sisters with very decent fortunes, he tells me I have little to expect from him but the family estate.

Wor. Well, sir, I congratulate you in having a father of such integrity and worth. I am surprised that he should have been so displeased at your marriage.

Lov. He displeased at the marriage! no, dear sir, it met with his highest approbation; and he has not a daughter of his own that he can love better than my dearest wife; she was a creditable tradesman's daughter, or rather in the mercantile line; well educated, and brought into the family with her eight hundred pounds on the day of her marriage. But O, sir! if you did but know half her excellencies, you would say she was the greatest fortune imaginable in herself, inestimable beyond the value of money. It has been the displeasure of my rich uncle, my mother's brother, which has been the cause of our perplexity.

Wor. What was that to him, if your marriage was conducted with so much purity, chastity, and propriety, and with the consent of your parents?

Lov. Sir, it was greediness and family pride. I have tainted the blood of the family by marrying a tradesman's daughter, when I might have enriched it by marrying the daughter of an Earl; and my mother unhappily joined with him in all his objections.

Wor. But you are not of his family, after all; and how could you, with your comparatively small fortune, and when even that was not to be yours till

after your father's death, support the daughter of an Earl, in the extravagant style in which they generally expect to live.

Lov. O, sir! but he meant to make me his heir.

Wor. What, then, had your uncle no children of his own?

Lov. Sir, he never was married for the sake of an offspring, but that he might enlarge his property. He therefore availed himself of the folly of a rich widow, who was fifteen years older than himself; and when he had possessed himself of her fortune, he treated her most cruelly. However, he had plenty of children, as is supposed, by other women; for he is a most debauched character, and at the same time a most extortionate miser, though he was still fond of making a family show; and till lately he meant to make a son he had, by a married woman in that neighbourhood, his heir; as she was, and as they call it, better bred than most of the low women with whom he had been connected; and the children he had by these, being ashamed to own them, he would have packed off to nurse, at the cheapest rate possible; and nothing rejoices him so much, as when he hears of the death of any of them.

Wor. How came he to alter his mind, and not make the son you mention his heir?

Lov. Sir, he educated him for that purpose, but in so mean a way, and introduced him among such a terrible set of low associates, that he turned out quite a blackguard: and being educated under such large expectations, he became also very extravagant: and as his father was too covetous to give him remittances equal to his extravagance, he got himself connected with a set of swindlers; and that he might be able to pay some gaming-debts, he committed such crimes, that he was obliged to leave the country, or be sent to jail; my uncle therefore gave him fifty

pounds, and sent him to America, and it is reported, that he died there of the yellow fever.

Wor. What horrid evils are connected with such a life of debauchery, that a man should be such a detestable brute* thereby, as to be ashamed of his own offspring, even so as to wish them dead! How different the happy state of those children, whose existence is their parents' boast and joy: how I hate the low libidinous tricks of the present evil, adulterous generation!

Lov. Sir, I am sure, it is impossible to detest them worse than they deserve. However, my uncle, after the death of this his profligate bastard, as I was his heir-at-law, began to think of adopting me as such.—My father could never bear the name of him; yet when he was frequently sending for me, he advised me by no means to insult him by personal incivilities, as his property, according to legitimate right, would next be mine. As my uncle ordered me I therefore went to his house; when the more I knew of him, the more I was disgusted at him.

Wor. Were you obliged to live pretty constantly with him then?

Lov. Not entirely so: for I was always striving to make an excuse of absence; and the argument, which best succeeded with him, was about the brewery; that as my father farmed a good deal of his own estate, he would be a considerable loser in the brewery, unless I kept the accounts; for my uncle never had but two objects in view,—by every means, however base some of those means might be, to enrich the family, and to gratify his impure desires.

Wor. Well, sir, this proved a just and providential excuse, to be as little as possible with such a family.

* In this respect, man, by his debauchery, is even BENEATH
A BRUTE.

Lov. But, sir, it was by this favourable turn towards me, that a chain of events was produced, which have proved the most perplexing and distressful to myself and my dearest Ann.

Wor. Really, sir, your history becomes so interesting, that I am quite anxious to hear the result of it.

Lov. Sir, before my uncle's determination had been made known to me, of adopting me as the heir to his estates, a design of marriage had, in a great measure been settled between myself and my dearest wife; and not less to the satisfaction of our parents, than myself. All that he ever said, was, "please yourself, and you will please me; money is no object; happiness in the married state consists in something better than money;" but when my uncle was determined to make me his heir, I was immediately to be married to some woman with money, or blood, as it is called. One of Lord Gambleton's daughters was therefore immediately thought of, and though his Lordship had considerably reduced his fortune by his extravagance, yet as for want of a male issue they were co-heiresses, it was judged an excellent match on my behalf; but a more worthless *right abominable* never existed among the right honourables: and thus between his Lordship's blood, and my uncle's money, I at all events must be united to this noble family.

Wor. O this noble blood, and this love of money! what mischief they create! But how did you get over the difficulty?

Lov. Why, sir, I knew that it would not be in my power to deal with my uncle, but by gentle means. When he proposed the match, I told him the connexion I had in a measure formed with Miss Commerce, before he had mentioned his kind design of making me his heir. He started and said, "who the

d—I is Miss Commerce?" When I told him she was a respectable tradesman's daughter, he immediately began swearing, after the mode of his general conversation: "that he would never allow any of his family to be united to such a set of d——d blackguards;" calling me a low fellow, and saying, if I would not see Lord Gambleton's daughter, he would adopt another heir, and that he would have nothing more to do with me: and that he expected I should first see how I liked the eldest, as that might prove the greatest advantage to myself and the family.

Wor. Really, sir, you had a difficulty before you, not easily to be surmounted.

Lov. Sir, I told him I could have no objection against seeing any of Lord Gambleton's daughters, but that I hoped he would put no restraint upon my affections, as that might prove a source of misery to me through life; and so matters were waived for the present, till I had time to consult my parents.

Wor. Well, sir, and I should hope your parents did not advise you to sacrifice your affections, for the sake of money or blood.

Lov. O, sir! my father behaved like a father, but it grieves me to say, my mother was just the reverse. She was at once struck with the proposal; observed, what a fine thing it would be to have her son, the acknowledged heir of the family to which she originally belonged, and to be united to such noble blood; and that my present engagement with Miss Commerce, was not so far gone, but that I might break it off.—O, sir! what a hard task was this to myself, and the dear creature to whom I am now so happily united!

Wor. It must have been a hard task indeed.—But how did you succeed in evading the difficulties of this perplexing dilemma?

Lov. You must suppose, sir, I was under the ne-

cessity of meeting with Lord Gambleton's family, who came on purpose to visit my uncle; and Lady Georgiana, being the eldest, was the first I was ordered to notice, and who was introduced to me accordingly, and of course, I was obliged to be very complaisant to her in return; while, as I suppose, she was directed to be more than complaisant to me. I cannot express myself how much I was disgusted, even at first sight, at the silly airs, the fulsome forwardness, of this *paltry mess* of noble blood, when brought into competition with the excellent understanding, undisguised modesty, and unaffected simplicity, of my dearest Ann.

Wor. Sir, I confess you would have made a sacrifice much to your discredit, had you, contrary to every just and generous feeling, given up for such motives, an object so worthy of your affections.

Lov. Sir, if I had not taken the liberty to inquire into your character, I should not have been so happy in your approbation of my conduct; I am satisfied it will therefore still meet with your approbation, when you hear the result of these events.

Wor. Dear sir, I have now no doubt of it.

Lov. After this wretched *bit of forwardness*, ignorance, and self-conceit, was proposed to me, to supplant my dearest Ann, for the sake of money and blood, my uncle presently perceived how much I was disgusted at her, and told me, (I shall not repeat the disgustful oaths he made use of on this occasion,) what a brewery blackguard I was, not to behave more civilly to one of Lady Georgiana's rank; that if I married her, I might, if I pleased, keep the other girl as my mistress; and he was sure a sum of money which he was ready to advance, would accomplish his wishes and mine; or that he had been dreadfully mistaken in the disposition of women, as far as ever he had to do with them.

Wor. Then your uncle supposed that all other people were as unprincipled as himself; and that every female character was of the same description, as those low objects of his brutal desires with whom he had been connected: though I confess it scarcely seems possible that you could have a stronger inducement presented before you, to behave dishonourably to the good lady, to whom it seems you were so solemnly betrothed.

Lov. Indeed, sir, it seemed next to nothing to me, after a second interview with Lady Georgiana, and Lord Gambleton's other two daughters: for my uncle insisted upon it, that I should go with him to return the visit; and O, the horrid conversation I there heard! the worst that could be, from a proud, unprincipled Peer, and a worthless, extortionate miser.

Wor. I am afraid, sir, I shall ask too much if I request you to proceed.

Lov. O no, sir! *the Right Honourable* had nothing to say, but that from his free living, according to the rank of life he was obliged to fill, and through some gaming debts, he had diminished his fortune; and that he could get no more from his tenants, as that he had racked up their rents to the utmost penny he could demand: and therefore, as courtly favour generally shone on noble blood, it might prove a convenient match to both families. As for loving one girl better than another, *that* they conceived to be all nonsense: and though it seemed necessary to propose the eldest first, yet if I proved rather squeamish about Lady Georgiana, there was Lady Augusta, and Lady Catherine, though there is scarce a pin to choose between them; if any thing, I think the preference might have been given to the eldest, but I am sure bad was the best. Still it was by no means against their noble blood that I was disgusted; let

people be as honourable in character and conduct as they are by birth and title, and some such honourable characters are not wanting among the nobility of our land, and I would always esteem them worthy of double honour; but when these three empty scraps of vanity, were to be brought into competition with my dearest Ann, I confess they appeared the most odious creatures I ever beheld.

Wor. I am sure, sir, that you, as a man of thought, must have felt very severely on this occasion. You cannot be ignorant of the style of education among young persons of rank: look at the plain, honest, country milk-maid; next contrast her with the vain baubles turned out, not only from the families of too many of the Right Honourables of the day, but from most of our modern boarding-schools: these from being first mere babies, afterwards get something above it as they grow up towards childhood; then they are sent to those destructive places of female education, where they are a second time reduced almost to a state of babyhood; and in this fool's paradise, they seem happy to live through all their lives, fifty times more offensive babes, than if they had never left their cradles.

Lov. Yes, sir, and three such as these were then presented before me, on account of money and blood, to be preferred to the excellent and intelligent person I now enjoy.

Wor. I should suppose, however, you must have suffered much, before you could have been extricated from these difficulties.

Lov. Indeed, sir, no person could have been called to a more severe contest than I have sustained, between my affection, my judgment, and my worldly interest; for my uncle's principles were perfectly libertine. He would ever be saying, that "the end of life is for every man to gratify himself, as best

sued with his natural appetites and dispositions. He was perpetually reading heaps of French publications on that subject; but here was my difficulty: what he liked best, I was to like best also, or else suffer the vengeance of his high displeasure. He had fully imbibed the sentiments belonging to their system of mock liberty, that men should be left to live as they list, without the least control.

Wor. What government can subsist, where every one is governed by his own abominable lusts and passions! But your mother thus joining with your uncle's views, must have been another very considerable impediment in your way.

Lov. Indeed it was; for she began immediately to act so cruelly and disgustingly to my wife, that she was soon obliged to discontinue all her visits to our house, though before these *golden* promises were made, it was a settled business that a marriage should take place.

Wor. Well, sir, under such circumstances as you have related, neither your father nor your mother ought to have refused their consent; and I am sure, when they had once solemnly given it, they had no right to retract it; and on account of such motives so improperly retracted, it would be equally unjust in either of you to have renounced the pure and chaste promises of a mutual connexion, which subsisted between you. It were well, if both parents and children, would duly consider the proper limits of their reciprocal duty towards each other; but for want of this, how frequently do children and parents distract their own minds, and destroy the peace of all connected with them! But what was the result of these matters?

Lov. Sir, my uncle for once gained a victory over his covetousness, by straining a point in connexion with Lord Gambleton, to see if they could

not bribe her, by the promise of a thousand pounds, provided she would be off from the engagement. The accomplishment of this business was to be put into the hands of my mother, and she the more eagerly entered into it, as her head was filled with a set of splendid dreams, that if they could blend the two families into one, whether it might not be possible to procure another patent of peerage, on behalf of the female line, through which the noble blood was still to flow: and nothing pleased the pride of my poor mother, like the idea that her only son might by his match wear a coronet; and upon these chimerical principles of happiness, we were called to sacrifice our affections and solemn engagements with each other.

Wor. The feelings of both your minds, must have been seriously disgusted by such base contrivances; and at the same time so artfully calculated to tempt both of you to violate the solemn promises which had subsisted between yourselves. But how did Mrs. Lovely receive the proposal?

Lov. Sir, the immediate answer my wife sent, (for we were not then together,) was just what I should have expected from the independent dignity, chastity and goodness of her mind: "That to pawn her affections for the lucre of gain, was so much beneath every feeling she possessed, that she at once rejected it with entire disdain; and that if they could find a chapman in me, for the sake of such rewards to give her up, after the most sacred promises which had passed between us, she should ever esteem it a most merciful deliverance to escape from one of so mean a mind; and that it would be nothing with her, whether I married any of Lord Gambleton's daughters, or any one else I might choose to prefer, though she herself had not the most distant idea that I could act a part so unfeeling, so ungenerous, and so vile."

Dear sir, who could not but admire a mind replete with such dignity of thought, and with such a generosity of heart?

Wor. But I hope, sir, that this spirited letter so far settled matters, as that you got rid of these importunities, that you might marry according to your wish?

Lov. No, sir, my uncle still kept up his expectations, that either by craft or cruelty, they might prevent our union: and in order to accomplish this, the next plan was to send me into the south-west of Ireland, where he had an estate, that I might see after his tenants, and collect some arrears of rent, with a merciless, crafty, hard-hearted wretch of a lawyer, at my elbow, to watch all my motions; and with secret instructions to try to debauch my morals and conduct as fast as he could: but in this, I thank God, he could not succeed; and there I was ordered to continue till my uncle followed me, which, as he said, would be in a few weeks.

By this plausible pretext, in first making me the steward of what, according to his promise, I was afterwards to possess, I conceived it my duty to follow his directions. But this was all done, to try, if possible, to break the heart of my dearest Ann. Being, however, suspicious of their designs, I made it a point to call on her before I went; and after I had told her the difficulties I had to encounter, I pledged myself, in the most solemn manner, before her and her parents, that whatever might be the consequence, we would unite for life.

Wor. Sir, I love you to my heart for your fidelity.

Lov. But, O sir! I shall never forget what we all felt on this occasion; though what I did was under a positive and deliberate determination, that I had

rather a thousand times support myself, as the servant of my father's brewery, or even by daily labour, with such a wife, than be united to the best of the three noble, paltry puppets, that had been exhibited before me.

Wor. Were you obliged to be long absent on this errand?

Lov. Sir, my uncle kept me above three months in suspense; still making some frivolous excuse to delay his coming. And O! what tricks and projects to accomplish their designs of preventing our union. First, the letter-carrier, unknown to the post-master, was bribed to bring all letters which passed between my dear Ann and myself, to my uncle or my mother, and these were opened and secreted from each of us.

One letter she was allowed to receive, written as by my direction, though not in my hand, stating that I had employed one of my comrades in wickedness, to correspond with one Mary Coleman, a common strumpet, engaging to give her twenty pounds a year for the maintenance of a bastard, they feigned I had by her, as I was under the necessity to marry Lady Georgiana Gambleton, from family circumstances; but still that my occasional visits should not be wanting; and this letter was supposed to have been mis-sent and intercepted, and then conveyed into the hands of that good little woman, that it might be the cause of breaking off the match, or of breaking her heart; and indeed it had nearly accomplished the design. Nobody can tell the distracted state of mind she was immediately thrown into, and in which she continued, till the fraud was detected; and the contrary surprise of joy when the plot was discovered, was not less trying to her tender feelings, than the deep grief she had before sustained.

Wor. What an infernal plan was this, to ruin the

peace of both your minds! But could Mrs. Lovely for a moment believe all this?

Lov. Sir, she knew not what to believe, the plot was so plausibly laid. Her nights were sleepless, and her mind was almost distracted. First, she could not account for my apparent neglect, as our letters were intercepted: and then my mother, being deep in the stratagem, was directed to tell my dear Ann, that she had from my authority to inform her, that our connexion could not take place, as circumstances were so altered since I first became acquainted with her; and that still a large recompense for her disappointment would be at her disposal, when she chose to accept it. And these accumulated circumstances at once threw her on a bed of sickness, from which it was expected she would never recover.

Wor. Indeed, if she believed half the stratagem, replete with such dissimulation and craft, no wonder that she should be completely overset by the apparent cruelty of your conduct. But how could they suppose that a plan of this sort should not very speedily have been discovered?

Lov. Sir, it seems they had other steps to pursue, that their tricks and projects might not be disclosed. During my residence in Ireland, a reverend gentleman was to be sent after me, known by the name of Dr. Cringer, who was to take me out of the way for several months, by conducting me the tour of Europe, and to make me the accomplished gentleman, by teaching me some of the modern European languages. This gentleman was one of Lord Gambleton's chaplains, and possessed a living in his gift; and since then, I have discovered him to be the most contemptible sycophant, and the meanest *toad-eater* to his lordship, that ever existed. However, this plot discovered itself before it was fully accomplished.

Wor. I should be happy to know how this took place.

Lov. Sir, while my dearest Ann was lying, as it was supposed on her death-bed, her father wrote to my father, to know what could be the cause of all these strange circumstances; and why he should suffer the loss of such an invaluable daughter, by a conduct so treacherous and unjust in me? Immediately both our parents met on the occasion; it would require some hours to tell you the pains they took to investigate the stratagem; but yet how speedily they transmitted to me the discoveries they had made!

Wor. You must have been considerably struck at this discovery.

Lov. Struck, sir! nobody can tell what I felt under the idea, that the affectionate and gentle heart of that excellent creature was ready to break through my supposed treachery, while I loved her inexpressibly, and was so fully determined to be faithful to my vows.

Wor. But I should hope, sir, your perplexities soon terminated with the discovery of these different plots.

Lov. Sir, I made not a moment's hesitation to travel directly from Ireland to Mr. Commerce's; and though I took all possible care that matters might be so broken to my dear Ann, as that she might not be too much overcome by the news of my arrival, and by the consideration of the events which made me take the journey; yet, O sir, what a meeting it was! Her tender and affectionate frame was so overpowered, especially during the first interview, as that no words can sufficiently express what she, and indeed, all of us felt; we wept, and sobbed and thus sympathized with each other for some time, before a single word could be spoken on either side. At length our affectionate parents retired from the

room, and when they returned, they informed us, that they had both entered into a firm resolution, that in order to put an end to all those detestable tricks and cabals, we should never again separate from each other till our marriage had actually taken place; for that they cared nothing for all events and consequences about large estates, and noble blood, as they were determined to make us both happy, by an immediate union.—All this was kept an entire secret from my mother and uncle; and as soon as my dear Ann was sufficiently recovered to be conveyed to Church, we were married accordingly; and O sir! the tears of sympathy, of mutual affection and joy, on that occasion, will never be forgotten!

Wor. But I suppose, this must have given considerable offence to your uncle.

Lov. Sir, I did all in my power to soften matters, but in vain; for immediately after marriage, I returned to the post at which my uncle had stationed me in Ireland; and though I had found that the worthless lawyer he sent with me, had informed him of my elopement, yet as he could only guess at the cause, I had to reveal the event to my uncle by letter. This I did with as much tenderness and respect as circumstances would admit, assuring him, that if I had displeased him by taking this step, yet that in every other point of view I wished to appear respectful, obedient, and attentive to his commands; but that I most humbly requested him, if he still meant me as his heir, that he would dispense with the European tour, at least for the present; as duty and affection strongly called me to attend upon the excellent young woman who was now become my wife, and who possessed every possible qualification to render herself a most highly respected character, in every situation of life she might be called to fill.

Wor. You should have added, excepting that of

noble blood. But how did your uncle receive this letter?

Lov. Sir, his rage was inexpressible. He wrote me a few lines, filled with oaths, for my folly, charging me to leave his house in Ireland directly; and to undertake the office I held at my father's brewery, as that was the most fit for me and the *shop-keeper's* girl, I had presumed to marry against his consent.

Wor. Well, sir, after all, it cannot be said you have lost what you never had, though the sacrifice you have made, of what you had in reversion, was very great; but still, you have gained the greatest advantage in your character and conscience, and an excellent wife into the bargain.

Lov. O sir! I have a full compensation for all my losses and troubles: though she had not the supposed advantages of the politer style of education of the day, yet having a very strong and retentive mind, by her own diligence and attention, she has provided for herself a fund of knowledge above most of her sex. She is exceedingly well read in history, and even in some branches of philosophy, especially in astronomy. The languages have, by no means, escaped her notice: she is a perfect mistress of the English, and writes an admirable letter; and all this knowledge she acquired by her own industry, in the midst of the hurry and bustle of the domestic concerns of a large family, to which she always gave the utmost attention; at one time very diligent as her father's scribe, and at another time not less attentive to fill an active station, even behind the counter, when needed.

Wor. After such real accomplishments as these, you had no great cause to lament the loss of what is called a politer education. Had she been one of those poor, paltry, affected, ignorant, conceited *misses* turned out of too many of our modern boarding-schools, the

loss of such a flimsy bit of nonsense in female shape, might have easily been repaired.

Lov. Yes, sir, but to me it appears as though the world could not produce her equal: she is one, of such an obliging mind and temper, that she never is happy, but as she can make others happy; while she is blessed with a disposition the most serene, affectionate and kind. If I can but preserve her life, I think I shall be the happiest man upon the earth. [Lovely weeps.]

Wor. Well, sir, as the principal cause of perplexity exists no longer, let us hope that her health will not only soon be restored; but that the rage of your uncle will, after awhile subside, notwithstanding he has been disappointed in his projects. "The hearts of all are in the hands of God."

Lov. Sir, these things are nothing to me: I possess all I want in my dearest wife, though I heard that my uncle should say to my mother, the other day, that he could not but admire my honesty, notwithstanding I was such a fool, (with his accustomed oath) in not following his directions: and another event took place soon after our marriage, which appeared to us not less remarkable than unexpected.

Wor. What was that, sir.

Lov. One of the former generation of the Greedy's, a great-uncle of mine, still lives: he is an old lawyer, and is now past eighty; though he is covetous and mean, and mercenary to a proverb, yet soon after our marriage, he came to see us; and mentioned how sorry he was that the match was displeasing to my uncle, though he confessed he approved of it highly, as he believed my wife, would be a very *prudent* and *saving* woman; and had I married any of Lord Gambleton's daughters, they might have made me a *spend-thrift*, and that he hated nothing worse. Now as I must be very unhappy at home, on account of my

mother's displeasure; and as my wife's spirits and strength were much impaired by what she had already sustained, he said he feared her life was in danger; and therefore had consulted a physician for her, who had prescribed moderate travelling, or a change of scene, without much fatigue, as her disease was more in her mind, than her body; and therefore, he advised me to take her, by slow journeys, from place to place, that her health and spirits might be recruited. In order to cover these expenses, he begged my acceptance of fifty pounds; promising, at the same time, to leave me all his property, provided he saw that I was a *frugal* young man; engaging also to do all in his power to reconcile my mother to the match.

Wor. Well, sir, though your great uncle's disposition inclines him to be parsimonious and mean, yet in this respect, he behaved to you in a manner that was generous and kind.

Lov. Yes, sir, but the very next day he repented of it; and wrote to my father, telling him he must have interest for it while he lived, though he still meant to appoint me his heir. He never was known before to do a single action, that looked either generous or kind; but having had several sharp contests about money matters, with my uncle, who had lately discarded me, they were quite at variance. He seemed, therefore, to be willing to take me up in opposition to him. Nor did my uncle's way of living please my great-uncle at any rate; for though he would do any thing for money, yet at times, when among the great, from family pride, he would be somewhat splendid and expensive in his style of living; and this always displeased my great-uncle exceedingly.

Wor. Ah, sir, such are the clashings of interest, found among the vices of mankind! But the displeasure of your mother must have been the cause of considerable concern to the whole of your family.

Lov. O sir! it has entirely destroyed our family happiness; though it is my father who has felt the most: he neither can find any happiness in my mother as his wife, nor can I find any comfort in her as a parent, while she hates my dearest Ann as much as my father loves her; and is living in perpetual hopes of her death, that another effort may be made, if possible, to get me in the mind to relish some of this noble blood: so that at present, we are obliged to retire from home for the sake of peace. And all this is the more cutting, as it comes from a mother, who once appeared to love me very tenderly; but still she is my mother. It is too painful for my recollection!

Wor. I perceive then, dear sir, that you are almost under the necessity of a temporary banishment; and as travelling from place to place is very expensive, do sir, let me request the favour of you and Mrs. Lovely to pass some time with us at Brookfield Hall. We are supposed to live in a salutary air; and you have your own little vehicle to take yourself and Mrs. Lovely to different parts about the country, for the sake of moderate exercise; you can travel about as you may like, and still make my house your head-quarters. If you please sir, as the shower seems to be over, we will adjourn to the house, and settle it with Mrs. Lovely. I am sure Mrs. Worthy and my daughters will be very happy in her company; Mrs. Lovely's want of noble blood will be of no consequence at our house. We are no great admirers of this commodity, as it is in general found in its present degenerate state.

Lov. Dear sir, what kindness and attention to an entire stranger! But as to support, both my father and my wife's father are determined to join in all that is necessary to assist, during our present perplexities; and though we suppose we must retire, for the

sake of peace, into some little country cot, at a distance from my mother, till matters may soften; yet should it please God to restore her health, a very little will make us comfortable, as we are so happy with each other. But I am sure, sir, Mrs. Lovely will be quite overcome by your most kind and affectionate attention to our situation.

Wor. O sir! don't mention any thing about these matters. I don't know what comfort there can be in life, but as we act for the mutual good of each other. True Christianity is sure to produce real politeness, without the assistance of the affectation of the world. Though their sort of politeness is, in general, little better than refined hypocrisy; yet we are commanded to "be given to hospitality," and "to be pitiful and courteous." I must, therefore, insist upon it that you allow me, without any farther ceremony, to make you and Mrs. Lovely our guests, while you continue in these parts. [To a day labourer.] Here John, go directly to the Golden Lion, and ask for Mr. Lovely's servant, and tell him to bring his master's horses and carriage, and all their packages, immediately to my house.

Lov. Oh, dear sir! this is quite too much!—I am afraid my poor dear wife will feel herself entirely thrown out of that humble contemplative state of retirement we wish to enjoy, by her being introduced into your house.

Wor. Oh, Mrs. Lovely will find just the contrary within half an hour after she has really commenced our guest: we have nothing to do with the fulsome formal parade of the world at our house. [To the labourer.] Why don't you go, John?

John. An't please your honour, I'll go directly.

Lov. Sir, if you insist upon such an extraordinary act of hospitality, I should be glad to go with him, as I have some matters to settle with my servant on this remove.

Wor. Well, sir, then I shall go to the house, and tell Mrs. Worthy and Mrs. Lovely how we have settled matters, and shall expect your speedy return.

Mr. Worthy and Mr. Lovely immediately separated. But as there is still a variety of events which may require an abridgment to prevent repetition, the reader will excuse the dress of dialogue, while he is farther informed, that Mr. Worthy accordingly went home, and in the fulness of his benevolent heart, addressed Mrs. Lovely rather too abruptly for the tender feelings of her delicate and sentimental mind; telling her that he had heard every circumstance respecting them; and that he was quite in raptures of the fidelity and integrity of Mr. Lovely's conduct; and begged their acceptance of every token in his power of their hospitality and esteem. He insisted upon it, that they should adjourn from the Golden Lion immediately, and be their guests, at least for some days; and that after they had received a short sample of their sincere and sympathetic regard, they should judge for themselves, how long they might farther favour them with their company.

This so won upon the mind of Mrs. Lovely, that she could scarcely support herself under the strong impressions of gratitude she felt, from this instance of truly Christian benevolence. Her husband just then came in, and found her scarcely able to speak, and in tears, from the influence this had upon her most grateful and affectionate disposition.

The cause of this was immediately explained to him. Let the reader's imagination next describe the feelings of this very sincere and affectionate youth; thus engaged in wiping away each tear as it dropt from her eye, while he had enough to do to quell the like sympathetic tear, as it involuntarily forced itself through the same sluices of his affection;

and then let him judge whether Mr. Lovely would have been a happier man, had he neglected one of such a mind, for the sake of either of the three unsentimental baubles, whichever it might have been, that through the mere pride, extravagance, or covetousness of the parties, was designed to have been entailed upon him.

Thus Mr. and Mrs. Lovely commenced the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Worthy, while the honest landlord of the Golden Lion parted with them with considerable regret. They could not, however, help remarking, in the course of the evening's conversation, how very orderly all their little matters were conducted at the public house, and that it was the first house they ever remembered of that sort, in which they heard the private voice of family prayer.

In the course of the evening conversation, Mr. Lovely started some queries concerning a young woman who appeared quite of a dejected turn of mind, and asked whether it was from some deep affliction, or, it should rather appear, from some melancholy derangement. But when Mr. Worthy began to tell the story of Mrs. Chipman, as it has been before related to the reader, it was soon found too strong a contrast of what had passed between Mr. and Mrs. Lovely, for their tender minds to bear, especially as related to the feelings of Mrs. Chipman, since she had been made sensible of the evil consequences of sin. The conversation, therefore, took another turn. Mrs. Worthy made some inquiries into the family of the Lovelys, as her mother used to claim relationship to some of that name. By this means they discovered there was no very distant relationship between the Worthys and the Lovelys, though they were very glad it was not on the side of the Greedys. Mr. Lovely also had to console himself with a hope, that an intermixture into that family, might ultimately be

of no great harm to the next generation, as his grandfather was too much the other way, and had suffered considerably, by lending large sums of money to some, in being security for others, and liberal upon all occasions, so that his fortune had been much injured by his generosity.

Upon this discovery, the easy and affectionate appellation of *cousin*, was at once adopted, and the conversation became familiar; soon after which, the day was terminated by family prayer, and supper; and as the day following produced some conversation which it is hoped will not prove uninteresting to my readers, though omitted in the former editions, the substance of that conversation shall next be narrated, as soon as the morning sun shall rise; and if these Dialogues be now in the hands of those who retire to their rest, without first dedicating themselves to God, by family prayer; while they conclude the evening by reading these little dramatic attempts, may this laudable custom, so seriously attended to at Brookfield-Hall, excite my kind readers also to break through the united barriers of sloth and shame; and ere they close their eyes in sleep, may they close the day with God.

DIALOGUE XXI.

BETWEEN MRS. AND MISS WORTHY, AND
MRS. LOVELY.

THE EVILS OF SEDUCTION, FARTHER CONTINUED.

ON the next morning, while Mr. Worthy and his family were at breakfast with their new guests, it was proposed by Mr. Worthy, that he and Mr. Lovely should take a ride to see some of the more extended prospects in that beautiful country, and then, on their return home, to pass through some of the retired glens that add a most pleasing variety to the enchanting neighbourhood of Brookfield-Hall: while the pleasantness of the day, and the serenity of the weather, invited Mrs. and Miss Worthy, and Mrs. Lovely to make an easier excursion in an open carriage nearer home. Though the captivating scenery of the place occupied Mrs. Lovely's attention for a longer time than was designed, from the weakly state of her health; yet their return allowed them sufficient time for the following conversation, before the designs of the more extended ride of Mr. Worthy and Mr. Lovely could be accomplished. After they were seated in an open pleasant hall, in this earthly paradise, some jellies and a little fruit were brought in.

Mrs. Wor. Now, madam, if Mr. Lovely was here, I think he would lay his commands upon you that you should taste how you like one of those jellies, and some of that fruit after your airing.

Mrs. Lov. O, madam, your kindness and attention to such entire strangers will never be forgotten.

Mrs. Wor. I hope not, for don't you remember yesterday evening that we made it out that we are cousins, and relatives demand from us more than the common civility that is generally bestowed on strangers.

Mrs. Lov. I thank you, kind madam: this gentle exercise in this delightful situation, seems to have done me so much good, that I shall accept your offer without waiting for Mr. Lovely's commands, though his commands of this sort are most affectionately numerous. Dear man, nobody can blame me for loving him.

Mrs. Wor. I think we should all blame you if you did not love him, for we are all charmed with him since my father has told us of his noble and generous conduct.

Mrs. Lov. O, madam, you cannot know half his worth; his most happy and delightful temper, can never be sufficiently appreciated. If his uncle could have broken off the match, I am sure it must have broken my heart, he is such a delightful man.

Mrs. Wor. Why we are all of us equally delighted with him.

Mrs. Lov. I am glad of it, dear madam, for I cannot but love all who love my dear husband. No woman can be blest with a better.

Mrs. Wor. Perhaps not, but I think I am blest with one quite as good. I have been married to Mr. Worthy above five and twenty years; and if we ever differ, we never disagree.

It is poor work when people's happiness ends with the honey moon. I doubt not but that the honey moon with us, will last all the days of our lives.

Mrs. Lov. So, dear madam, the landlord of the Golden Lion says. What a quiet and orderly house

they keep! while their kindness and attention is remarkably engaging. Mr. Lovely, and myself, are so pleased with them, that it was our intention to have passed a few days under their humble roof, had not your kind invitation prevented; and especially as the beautiful scenery of the place, so highly cultivated and improved by Mr. Worthy's taste, so captivated our attention.

Mrs. Wor. Yes, and this is the only thing in which Mr. Worthy seems a little extravagant, in dressing his old family demesne. Most travellers are highly delighted with our situation.

Mrs. Lov. I should be surprised at their want of taste, if they were not. Considering what troubles we have lately sustained; and what, from your affectionate hospitality, we have now before us, it seems as though we were on enchanted ground.

Mrs. Wor. Why Mr. Worthy considers by these improvements how well he employs his poor neighbours; and he finds it much better to give them labour, than to give them money without it: and this is one reason why our parish poor rates are scarcely felt.

Mrs. Lov. What a happiness it would be if every country gentleman would follow such an example!

Mrs. Wor. Indeed it would. It may be now and then necessary to take a little journey for the sake of our family, yet Mr. Worthy cannot bear to be long from home, and this makes him so much beloved while he is at home.

Mrs. Lov. I am sure Mr. Lovely will be just such another, if he ever should possess any of the family estates, but that is now scarcely to be expected.

Mrs. Wor. I dare say he will: there is no doubt of the generosity of his mind. The best end of living, is to live for the good of others.

Mrs. Lov. It is amazing what he feels for that

poor disconsolate woman at the Golden Lion: but if she is a penitent, bad as her conduct may have been, she is still to be pitied.

Mrs. Wor. We hope she is a penitent: but she has enough to repent of.

Mrs. Lov. Indeed she has; and she is most deservedly and severely punished by the reflections of her own mind. I thank God, there are no such reflections between my dear George and me. I have heard more of her story this morning; though my spirits were too weak to hear the whole of it yesterday evening; and however severe our troubles may have been, yet still they have been as nothing, when compared to an unfortunate lady in our neighbourhood, from the cruelty and treachery of her husband.

Mrs. Wor. Perhaps it is more painful for a woman to be forsaken by her husband, than for a man to be forsaken by his wife; though it is the same sort of cruelty and treachery on either side of the question.

Mrs. Lov. Indeed, madam, you would say so, if you were to hear the story of this unfortunate lady.

Mrs. Wor. Perhaps you have not sufficient strength and spirits to tell the story.

Mrs. Lov. O yes I have! The agitation I felt yesterday in coming among strangers, through your great kindness, is considerably subsided.

Miss Wor. But before you begin, I must step out for my work. Your talking need not hinder my working.

Mrs. Wor. But where is your sister Mary? had she not better come in and help you to finish your work for the poor children?

Miss Wor. She will, as soon as she returns from Betty Newman's; she is gone to take measure of one of the twins.

[Miss Worthy steps out for her work. During her absence Mrs. Worthy remarks]

Mrs. Wor. This is the best way I can find out of educating my daughters; and I am happy to say, that they love the task, and wish to be a blessing to their poor neighbours by attending to their wants. They would much rather dress the poor than dress themselves. They have been taught to esteem it the highest folly, to be the slaves and fools of fashion. Any thing that appears like fantastic dress, either in man or woman, with them, is a sure indication not only of the weakness of the head, but also of the depravity of the heart.

Mrs. Lov. It is much to be lamented how many stationed in the higher circles of life, are half ruined, even from childhood, by a bad education. I am very glad my kind parents favoured me rather with a useful, than what is called a polite education, according to that station of life they knew it was most probable I might be called to fill: advantageous knowledge and the improvement of the mind, were what I was directed to seek after; and as this has not lessened me in my dear Mr. Lovely's esteem, I have nothing to regret on that score. I hope, dear madam, the younger branches of your family, will equally prove to your satisfaction, as well as to their own credit through life.

Mrs. Wor. I have many an anxious thought about them, but the younger branches of our family have not yet finished their schooling, and we had anxiety enough before we could provide such places of education for them, as are best calculated for the proper improvement of their minds. We feel the education of our children a most solemn charge; and to begin well with them is one of the most important steps that can be taken for their future good. But all is nothing without the divine blessing on our ef-

forts. If our little ones turn out as well as our two eldest daughters, we shall be the happiest family upon earth.

Mrs. Lov. I hope, madam, as long as you continue me your guest, you will allow me, as far as I have strength, to help the young ladies in their excellent employment.

Mrs. Wor. Though my daughters are very attentive in this beneficial way for the good of others, yet at times we are not forbidden to do something for ourselves, and for the instruction of our own minds; especially in the winter season. Then some of us work; while others read history, geography and other useful and improving publications.

Mrs. Lov. I suppose sometimes different periodical publications attract your notice.

Mrs. Wor. Indeed but seldom: for most of them are not only avowedly written with a party design, but too frequently in such an angry party spirit, as to irritate and disturb the mind, so that we pay very little attention to them; Mr. Worthy cannot bear them. But our greatest feast is, when we can get the worthy minister of our parish to pass an evening with us. He is not only a good, but a well-educated man. And then he gives us delightful lectures in natural and experimental philosophy, but especially in astronomy. Mr. Worthy has lately presented us with the fine pair of globes you see in that recess, and an admirable telescope. In short, our philosophical apparatus is now become very considerable. And at times we have many of our more intelligent neighbours who attend these intellectual feasts. But the best feast is, the excellent improvement we have of it from our pious minister, who displays the glory of the great Creator in such an admirable manner, in all his works.

[Miss Worthy just then returns with her work.]

Miss Wor. Now, madam, we are just ready to hear about the lady you mentioned, namely, Mrs. Sharp.

Mrs. Lov. A deplorable story it truly is. She has experienced a very severe reverse of fortune, by her calamities. She was the only daughter of very creditable parents. Her father, I am told, was a captain in the army, who lost his life when she was quite young. The disconsolate widow, however, lived to educate her in a decent and respectable style, though she was taken off by a fever before she had reached her twentieth year: and it seems her parents left behind, a fortune of nearly seven thousand pounds for her use.

Mrs. Wor. No wonder if at such an age she was off her guard, and made a mistake in marriage, being so early deprived of the guides of her youth, before her judgment was properly matured.

Mrs. Lov. Why, madam, though she was married so young, and within the year after her mother's death, yet it was the general opinion that no charge of inadvertency could be brought against her. Mr. Sharp, by all accounts, was then supposed to be a very desirable young man, and in early life was esteemed by most as of general credit and reputation. He was of considerable practice in the law, and had formed some very respectable connexions; and though he was not more than four and twenty when they were married, yet he being then very diligent and clever in his profession, most people thought that she was a fortunate young woman, and that it would prove a happy match. In short, their prospects upon their marriage, and for some time afterwards, were very promising; and while their family increased, it seemed to be an additional happiness to them both.

Mrs. Wor. How many children had they?

Mrs. Lov. They lived together till they had four,

and at that time most people envied their mutual felicity with each other.

Mrs. Wor. What could be the cause of the dissolution of such a happy connexion?

Mrs. Lov. O! madam, a French gentleman and lady were driven over into this country by the troubles in France, and settled in our neighbourhood. He gave himself out as being one of the French nobles, but was only known by the name of Mr. Dupée.—Who, or what they were no one could tell; and whether they were or were not married, was equally uncertain. He was certainly a very vain, weak man, and she a most artful and intriguing woman; not only possessed of a strong and powerful understanding, but deeply tutored in all those pernicious principles which have proved so destructive to the peace of mankind, and especially in the country from whence they came.

Mrs. Wor. No wonder, that any connexion with such sort of people should bring ruin with them wherever they are admitted. But how came Mr. Sharp to be acquainted with them?

Mrs. Lov. It was Madam Dupée, who seemed to be the cause of all the trouble; she was the manager of every thing; for he being troubled with epilepsy, and at the best of a weak understanding, he paid but very little attention to his own concerns, so that not long after their arrival, she was in the habit of sending for Mr. Sharp to assist her in settling their affairs, for he certainly was a man of some property; and at times was fond of making a little show.

Mrs. Wor. But if Mrs. Sharp was of an amiable and domestic disposition, he must have been a very vile man, to have been insnared by such an artful stranger.

Mrs. Lov. O, madam! Mrs. Sharp had many an aching heart about him, soon after their acquaintance

commenced; but she kept her sorrows to herself, although even the children could discover a difference of conduct towards her, and at times would say, I wonder why Papa does not love Mamma as much as he used to do.—Their innocent prattle frequently drew many a tear from her eyes.

Mrs. Wor. No wonder if after this, when his affections were in a measure withdrawn, if matters soon went from bad to worse. His undue intimacy with such an intriguing woman, must have given Mrs. Sharp a deal of trouble. [To Mrs. Lovely.] What should you and I feel, if we had such husbands?

Mrs. Lov. O, dear madam! a little of such sort of treatment from my dear George, would soon be the death of me. I have had a deal of trouble for him, but it seems almost impossible that I should ever have any trouble from him, though perhaps Mrs. Sharp once thought the same, but all this was but the beginning of much deeper sorrows; and the sudden death of Mr. Dupée, completely removed every obstacle out of the way of their farther designs.

Mrs. Wor. How came that about?

Mrs. Lov. O, madam! though his epileptic fits were at times very violent, yet from one of them he never recovered, and this was attended with some such circumstances as rendered it very doubtful, whether there was not some contrivance between them both, that he never should recover, though nothing could positively be proved against them.

Mrs. Wor. What! is it supposed that Mr. Sharp assisted in the murder of the poor man?

Mrs. Lov. It is too generally suspected, that some very improper treatment during his last fit, was the cause of his dissolution; for no person was permitted to come near his corpse, while he lay dead in the

house, and this preys upon Mrs. Sharp's mind so severely, that she is almost distracted.

Mrs. Wor. If she had the most distant suspicion, that he could be accessory to such an abominable crime, in addition to his unfaithfulness and unkindness; how could she bear such a monster of a man? no wonder that it caused a complete separation between them.

Mrs. Lov. And now it began to appear most evidently to have been his design to accomplish such a separation. Though the woman put on the appearance of one of the most inconsolable widows that ever lived, for being, if any thing, a Roman Catholic, she sent to all the popish chapels far and wide, for their masses, to pray his soul out of purgatory, yet more of the company of Mr. Sharp was evidently all she wanted; for she not only contrived to sweep all her husband's property into her own pocket, they not having any children; though several nephews and nieces; and these were all forgotten, that she might get the whole into her absolute possession. And it seems his will was the entire fabrication of Mr. Sharp, while he and she were the only joint executors of the whole concern, and this furnished him with a pretext to give almost the whole of his company to this vile woman; while his broken-hearted wife, and neglected children, were almost entirely forsaken by him. Indeed if ever he even occasionally went to his own home, it was only to see his wife distracted with grief, at the sight of the man with whom she had lived with so much conjugal felicity for so long a time; now torn from her bosom by this artful foreigner, and all his children neglected by him, while the youngest was still hanging on her breast.

Mrs. Wor. Poor woman, she must have been the object of universal pity.

Mrs. Lov. Yes, madam, of all that had any pity

in them; while he now began to be not less the object of universal abhorrence and contempt.

Mrs. Wor. Could he continue in a place where the odium excited against him, must, one would suppose, have been so very universal?

Mrs. Lov. No, madam, nor did he design it from the first: for though this artful French woman wanted to deceive people, by assuming the most tragical and frantic airs of grief, and by giving it out, that she could never live in a house where she saw her dear husband die in such agonies; consequently must sell all, and leave the place, and retire into her own country; yet this was the very thing that Mr. Sharp was aiming at, to accomplish the rest of his plan. For immediately upon her requisition he had a pretext to sell off all her household property, and furniture, with all possible speed, and after this, nothing would do, but that Mr. Sharp should attend this abominable wretch to the water-side, leaving behind him a promise to return. To this Mrs. Sharp was obliged reluctantly to submit. She having some faint hopes that she might yet live to see better days, when the object that insnared his affections should be removed from them. But in this she was also mistaken. He went, cruel wretch, to return no more.

Mrs. Wor. This was completely enough to break her heart.

Mrs. Lov. But, madam, there was more heart-breaking work after all this, for he absolutely contrived to avail himself of all the property she brought with her into the family, by a most vile swindling trick.

Miss Wor. What was the trick?

Mrs. Lov. They say, that some sort of lawyers are up to every thing, and as he was frequently in the habit, in his professional line, of buying and selling

estates, when these vile designs first entered into his head, before the death of Mr. Dupée, he told his wife that he had an opportunity of buying an estate with her fortune, to a very considerable advantage; which he should settle on her and their family, and though she had then her fears, lest she should soon be deprived of the remaining share of his affections, sooner than give him any pretext against her, she reluctantly submitted, and completely ruined herself thereby. This advantageous purchase he gave her to understand, was fully accomplished. And after his departure she naturally inquired, where this imaginary estate for herself and children was to be found; but think what her feelings must have been upon the painful discovery, that all was an entire cheat, and that she had nothing left, for herself and family, but a little pocket-money, the furniture of the house in which she lived, and a few outstanding debts, while these were scarcely sufficient to discharge the debts the vile wretch had left against her, for their house-keeping expenses.

Mrs. Wor. Were not these rather to be conceived as debts belonging to her husband?

Mrs. Lov. But as she and her children partook of the benefit of them, she honourably discharged them, till she had scarcely any thing left for herself, but what must soon be exhausted. She has indeed a little plate, and a few valuable trinkets, and some of these it seems she has already parted with, and when these are gone, she has nothing but poverty and distress before her.

Mrs. Wor. Have they not heard any thing of him since his departure?

Mrs. Lov. Not a tittle; and it is now three months since. She never expects to hear from him again.

Miss Wor. Vile fellow. No matter for that, if

the poor forsaken woman and her children can only be supported.

Mrs. Lov. I hope she will; for several people have already sent her some presents, and my dear George says he will give her a trifle.

Mrs. Wor. And I dare say, my dear Samuel will add another trifle.—But did Mrs. Sharp show any such tempers at home, so as to give a pretext to her husband, not to be so fond of her company as formerly.

Mrs. Lov. I never heard that she did; she is said to be a woman of very engaging manners, and of an amiable temper, though I dare say, he would find no very comfortable reception on his return, when he had neglected his own family fire-side, evening after evening, to hear her distressful sighs, and to see tears of grief, every now and then starting from her eyes, while he had no other excuse for himself, than that of taking the opportunity of gaining better instruction in the French language, which it seems he knew well enough before.

Mrs. Wor. The more innocent and excellent her character is made to appear, it is hoped the more ready people will be to come forward towards her support.

Mrs. Lov. Ah, madam! but after having lived in comparative affluence, to be reduced to live in a state of entire dependence upon the bounty of others, is a very painful event. She has not been accustomed to any way of getting her own livelihood, nor would her little family allow her to do it if she had it in her power: in short, she cannot help herself, while she feels it a mortifying thought to be helped by others, though one of her faithful servants says, she cannot leave her, if she works for nothing, while the prattle of her little children cuts her to the heart. At one time, they will be asking her, Where is Papa

gone? why don't he bring us pretty things as he used to do? and when at times they see her in tears, they will ask, What makes you cry, Mamma? you say we are naughty if we cry. Then again when their mother provides them with but a scanty meal, being apprehensive that her little remaining stock will soon be exhausted, they will be asking with artless surprise, why they are allowed so little; and what is become of the good things they formerly used to have.

Miss Wor. What painful feelings such sort of questions must excite in a mother's breast!

Mrs. Lov. Yes: and what additional pain must she have felt, when she began to find it necessary to part with the furniture out of her house, at different times, to provide even such scanty meals as these, while she was painfully at a loss to know how to provide a sufficiency to pay the taxes, as they were demanded of her. The most disconsolate widow upon earth has not half the cause of grief as has fallen to the lot of this afflicted woman; what less can be expected, than that grief should send her to the grave with a broken heart? even a detail of such uncommon sufferings, is quite sufficient for any person of common humanity to narrate.

Mrs. Wor. Perhaps you had better defer the rest of the narration, until another opportunity, lest it should be too much for your spirits.

Mrs. Lov. I have but little farther to observe concerning her.—Oh, here is my dear George, and Mr. Worthy riding up to the door; I am glad they have returned so soon.

No sooner had they alighted, than the conversation became too desultory to demand the reader's attention, nor is it necessary that the narration respecting Mrs. Sharp should be continued, as all that is material has been sufficiently made known. I shall

only observe, that though the Lovelys could not but be charmed with the affectionate hospitality of the Worthys; yet but little was said respecting Mr. Lovegood, only from general hints: and as he was scarcely from home on the Saturday, the first time they saw him, was in his official duty on the Sunday morning. Mr. Worthy, however, stepped aside for a short time; to the Vicarage, to tell him what sort of guests had been providentially brought to his house, together with a short detail of their history, supposing that Mr. Lovegood with his wonted wisdom and readiness of mind, might know how to improve the event, by introducing such wise, though indirect remarks, as might be best calculated to do them good. The result of that day's services, it is to be hoped, will prove sufficiently interesting to captivate the reader's attention, and to improve his mind.

END OF VOL. I.

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